How Criminal Governance Undermines Elections

Jessie Trudeau*

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Abstract

Existing theories of criminal governance indicate that criminal groups can influence elections, sometimes acting as brokers. I argue that criminal groups' capacities as brokers stem from their control over territory and, subsequently, over voters. I theorize two criminal brokerage strategies, both made possible by territorial control: (1) *gatekeeping* limits rival candidates from entering the criminally governed area and (2) *corralling* influences vote choice. I test my theory in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, using a natural experiment that leverages exogenous variation in voter assignment to voting booths, a novel dataset on criminal involvement in elections, and qualitative interviews. I show that fewer total candidates receive votes in areas with high gatekeeping, while criminally-aligned candidates are more likely to win in areas with high corralling. Both gatekeeping and corralling are associated with a decrease in electoral competition. These findings bring the literatures on clientelism and criminal governance closer together.

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*Assistant Professor of Political Science, Syracuse University. I am grateful to Elena Barham, Robert Bates, Christopher Blair, Chris Carter, Kaitlyn Chriswell, Matt Cleary, Abby Córdova, Frances Hagopian, Alisha Holland, Alyssa Huberts, Seth Jolly, Steven Levitsky, Isabella Montini, Lucas Novaes, Ana Paula Pellegrino, David Skarbek, and seminar participants at APSA, AL CAPONE, CIDE-PEV, CLEAN, NEWEPS, NYU Comparative Politics Series, and numerous workshops at Harvard University. This project has been generously supported by the Harvard University Brazil Studies Program, DRCLAS, FHBI, and Weatherhead Center, as well as the Corporación Andino de Fomento. I also thank Swathi Srinivasan, João Pedro Oliveira, David Becerra Medina, and May Soshi for research assistance.

1 Introduction

In many democracies, criminal organizations play an important role in electoral politics. During campaigns, these criminal groups make deals, promises, and threats of violence, interacting with both candidates and voters. This paper illustrates *how* criminal groups deliver votes by operating as political brokers and how this affects democratic electoral competition.

A rich literature establishes that criminal groups are influential political actors (Barnes 2017; García-Ponce 2025; Skarbek 2024). Some studies acknowledge criminal groups' potential to mobilize voters, generating useful concepts that describe these relationships like "criminalized electoral politics" (Albarracín 2018), "double-barreled clientelism" (Arias 2006), or "armed clientelism" (Eaton 2006; Gallego 2018a). I build on this literature by elaborating two of these brokerage strategies in greater detail and empirically investigating their relationship to voting. In the clientelism literature, the role of criminal groups as brokers is still undertheorized, and they are often excluded from major typologies of brokers.[1] My theory brings these two literatures closer together by refining two mechanisms – *gatekeeping* and *corralling* – that explain how criminal groups can effectively deliver votes to their candidate partners.

I argue that criminal groups derive certain capacities from their control over territory that give them unprecedented social and militarized influence over voters, making them particularly effective at brokering votes. My theory, and the two mechanisms I develop, emerged from 18 months of fieldwork, including over 50 semi-structured interviews with candidates, staffers, voters, and community leaders in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil between the 2016 and 2020 election cycles. *Gatekeeping* obstructs rival candidates' access to voters. *Corralling*

1. Political brokers are "local intermediaries who provide targeted benefits and solve problems for their followers; in exchange, they request followers' participation ... and often demand their votes" (Stokes et al. 2013).

influences residents' vote choice.[2] Both mechanisms stem from criminal governance.[3] I test the plausibility of each mechanism, leveraging new measures of these hard-to-observe concepts and a novel empirical strategy.

To estimate the electoral returns of gatekeeping and corralling, I examine city council elections in Rio de Janeiro. I focus on local elections, which are easier for criminal groups to influence, according to evidence from Brazil (Gay 1993; Arias 2017), Italy (Alesina et al. 2019; Daniele and Dipoppa 2017), and Colombia (Gallego 2018b; García-Sánchez 2016; Gutiérrez Sanín 2015).

First, I create an original panel dataset from 2008-2020 about criminal involvement in local elections. I use the geolocated text from 1.45 million anonymous complaints to measure gatekeeping and corralling at the *favela*-level,[4] and combine this with fine-grained electoral data across four election cycles. Next, I leverage the exogenous assignment of residents to voting booths to compare voting between residents who live under criminal governance and their neighbors who do not, as if it were a natural experiment. I combine an original panel dataset on criminal governance with this data on criminal involvement in elections to analyze how gatekeeping and corralling vary by criminal group.

I show that election results in favelas where gatekeeping or corralling occur are less competitive than in favelas where they do not occur or in middle-class areas. Fewer unique candidates receive votes in favelas where criminal gatekeeping is present. Where criminal corralling is present, criminally-connected candidates are more likely to win that area's votes. I demonstrate that this is true for extortion racket *milícia*-affiliated candidates and to a lesser extent, for candidates affiliated with drug trafficking gangs. When gatekeeping, corralling, or both are present, elections are less competitive. Back-of-the-envelope calculations suggest

2. This term emerged inductively through my interview research. I discuss its connections to related concepts in Section 2.2.

3. Criminal governance goes beyond physical presence; it is "the imposition of rules or restriction on behavior by a criminal organization" (Lessing 2021).

4. *Favelas* are informal settlements, often where criminal governance is concentrated.

that 27% of elected city councilors won because of votes mobilized from criminal brokers.

My findings make three main contributions. First, I contribute to a rich body of literature on the consequences of criminal involvement in elections. Accounts of violence against or collusion with politicians theorize how criminal groups sway election outcomes (Albarracín 2018; Alesina et al. 2019; Arias 2006, 2017; Blume 2017; Córdova 2019; Daniele and Dipoppa 2017; Trejo and Ley 2020). Studies focused on the kaleidoscope of non-state actors in Colombia show that these armed groups intimidate rival politicians and coerce voters into supporting their favored candidate (Acemoglu et al. 2013; Gutiérrez Sanín 2015; García-Sánchez 2016; Gallego 2018b; Steele 2011; Uribe 2025; Weintraub et al. 2015). A related literature demonstrates that other actors (e.g., political parties or incumbents) use violence to dissuade rivals or manipulate vote choice (Birch et al. 2020; Hafner-Burton et al. 2014; Höglund 2009; LeBas 2013; Matanock and Staniland 2018; Siddiqui 2022, 2023; Turnbull 2021).

This paper builds on these studies by focusing on two modalities of criminal group intervention in elections that are salient in the Rio de Janeiro case. I develop and empirically test two mechanisms, gatekeeping and corralling, through which criminal brokers deliver votes. This paper moves the literature forward by empirically demonstrating that even subtle forms of influence, such as restricting candidates' access to voters, have the potential to influence elections.

Second, my theory differentiates criminal groups from other classes of brokers by focusing on criminal groups' social and militarized control over territory. Theories of criminal governance have documented criminal groups behaving as brokers, delivering votes on a contractual basis (Arias 2006, 2017; Albarracín 2018; Eaton 2006; Gallego 2018a; Gutiérrez Sanín 2015, 2019). Despite this, theories of clientelism often omit criminal organizations in their rich typologies of brokers (Holland and Palmer-Rubin 2015; Novaes 2018; Stokes et al. 2013). I advance both literatures by arguing that criminal groups' ability to be effective

brokers is because of their ability to control territory. By detailing how criminal territorial control matters for influencing voters, this paper sets the stage for future research on this crucial yet underexplored category of political broker.

Third, my results help to explain why politicians may tolerate the risks of engaging with criminal groups. While tough-on-crime platforms remain popular at the polls (Flores-Macías and Zarkin 2022; Holland 2013), my findings suggest that criminal groups can help candidates win. When candidates hire criminal brokers, it creates an agency dilemma in which politicians may want to weaken organized crime broadly, but not necessarily in the neighborhoods that vote for them. This tension makes it difficult to fight crime effectively and get crime out of politics. This paper provides a theory that illuminates what politicians can gain from partnering with criminal groups, adding to the recent body of work about the state's complex incentives to address the root cause of organized crime (Blattman 2024; Lessing 2017; Trejo and Ley 2020). Overall, the findings from this paper speak to open questions about criminal influence over politics, and how certain politicians leverage criminal governance for electoral gain.

2 Criminal Groups as Brokers

When criminal groups govern, they differ from other brokers because of their control over territory. A key scope condition for this theory is a criminal group's consolidated control over an area. My theory begins from the premise that criminal groups have medium to high levels of consolidated governance, meaning that they already have power and relationships with existing organizations in their area (e.g., the "collaborative" or "divided" criminal regime types in Arias (2017)), rather than criminal groups with only tenuous or contested authority.

When criminal groups govern, they often exert broad control over social and civic life. They build hierarchical ties with voters and fully or partially control resource distribution

networks, providing certain goods and services as if they were the state (Barnes 2025; García-Sánchez 2016; Magaloni, Franco-Vivanco, et al. 2020; Magaloni, Robles, et al. 2020). Although this varies across contexts, other civic organizations commonly defer to the criminal group (Arias 2006; Gay 1993; LeBas 2013; Moncada 2013). These patterns mirror the brokerage dynamics between patrimonial brokers or chiefs and their constituents. Distributive politics scholars argue that linkages of this type serve as the "social cement" for particularly durable clientelistic connections (Baldwin 2015; Koter 2013; Kramon 2019; Stokes 2009).

However, unlike chiefs or patrimonial elites, criminal groups have unparalleled militarized *territorial control*, which I define as the capacity to regulate state presence and limit the presence of rival armed groups within a defined area. Territorial control is often acquired through the use of violence against rivals or the state, meaning that criminal groups have a monopoly or near-monopoly of violence in their area. To protect their turf, they use extreme violence when necessary to safeguard territory (Barnes 2022; Rios 2013). Prior work shows that criminal groups leverage territorial control for business and security goals (Blattman et al. 2025; Breuer and Varese 2023; Magaloni, Franco-Vivanco, et al. 2020; Tilly 1985), to subdue the local population (Arias 2017; Barnes 2025), and even to shape elections (Gallego 2018b; García-Sánchez 2016).

I extend these claims to argue that this level of territorial control is a tool largely unavailable to other brokers. Even other types of brokers with hierarchical control over voters and access to violence – such as certain ethnic leaders – do not have this degree of militarized control over territory. Building on Mares and Young (2016), who underscore the importance of violence as the means for criminal groups to obtain votes, I posit that criminal groups' power as brokers stems less from violence than from their control over territory, which *enables* them to use violence, among other strategies. For example, a community organizer in Rio de Janeiro described how criminal territorial control can be leveraged to supersede the preferences of other brokers in the area and get votes for *their* candidate. "The pastor's, the

personal trainer's, the schoolteacher's... everyone else's candidates have to get approved by the criminal organization before they can campaign here" (Interview 1).[5]

I highlight two key dimensions of criminal territorial control, which I call border control and internal control. *Border control* is control over the perimeter of the governed area. Criminal groups commonly employ "lookouts" to monitor urban areas (Dowdney 2003) or raise militias to defend larger swathes of territory (Grillo 2012). Border guards may question, frisk, or use violence to block hostile or unknown parties from entering. *Internal control* refers to control over residential life. Some groups accrue goodwill through social ties (Blume 2021; Dowdney 2003), while others use coercion to instill fear (Magaloni, Robles, et al. 2020). Internal control includes curfews, taxation, and dispute resolution (Lessing 2021).

Criminal groups' capacity to monitor the community's perimeter and influence residents, derived from *border* and *internal* control, respectively, sets them apart from competing political brokers. Though they may resemble Holland and Palmer-Rubin's (2015) independent broker,[6] who leverages a personal network or coercive power to mobilize voters, I argue that territorial control differentiates them from other contemporary brokers. Unlike independent brokers in their community (e.g., religious or civic leaders), only criminal groups can enforce border control to choose which candidates may enter and campaign. And unlike partisan brokers outside the community, criminal groups leverage internal control to more precisely target vote buying or deliver threats. Such targeting may be especially effective, because residents of criminally governed territories are, on average, more likely to be marginalized and thus vulnerable to clientelism (Leeds 1996; Zaluar 1994).

Where criminal organizations govern, standard explanations of brokerage relationships may no longer be sufficient to describe the electoral dynamics among candidates, criminal

5. See Appendix G for data reporting and a discussion of the ethics of all qualitative sources.

6. Criminal groups that are part of the party more closely resemble hybrid brokers. Though not the focus of this paper, they also mobilize voters, as documented by Siddiqui (2022) in Pakistan.

groups, and voters. I suggest two mechanisms through which criminal governance can deliver votes: *gatekeeping* and *corralling*.

2.1 Candidate Gatekeeping

One way criminal brokers affect electoral outcomes is by gatekeeping, or restricting the candidate pool. Criminal groups leverage *border control* to selectively allow some candidates to physically enter the community, and others not. This shapes the information that voters have about the candidate pool, limiting contestation. The literature on armed groups and elections documents this behavior in Colombia (Gallego 2018b; García-Sánchez 2016) and Brazil (Albarracín 2018; Arias 2017). I formalize its logic below.

Criminal brokers can shape information about candidates through two channels: facilitating their preferred candidate's access to voters, or obstructing rival candidates' access to voters. The first channel draws on informational theories of clientelism, in which brokers signal candidate viability by increasing exposure to the candidate (Muñoz Chirinos 2019). Brokers can intensify this physical contact through in-person events or advertising (Kramon 2016). The second channel – preventing rival candidates from accessing voters – follows from their border control. Criminal groups can grant *their* candidate entry and obstruct access to the rest. When rivals cannot physically enter the community to campaign, I expect this to obstruct their efforts to advertise. Anonymous complaints from voters support this logic.[7] One voter states:

> "Cars with other candidate's decals are publicized and prohibited from moving about FAVELA. CANDIDATES A and B struck a deal with the traffickers from FAVELA, buying the entire community, prohibiting posters, decals, pamphlets, and even activity involving other candidates on residents' social media" (Com-

7. These complaints are described in greater detail in Section 4.1.1 and listed in Appendix G.

plaint 1).

When gatekeeping occurs, voters should receive a disproportionate amount of information about the criminal group's candidate and little about rivals. Candidate interviews support this logic. Excluded candidates report being unable to campaign without bargains with criminal leaders. Twelve candidates recounted being told they could not campaign somewhere, or were asked to leave favelas where they lacked such arrangements. Candidates and staffers acknowledge that gatekeeping increases the chances of winning. Four used an idiom that means "closing a deal,"[8] signaling mutual understanding about the *exclusivity* that gatekeeping confers. Many who hired criminal brokers expected to be the only ones campaigning in the area. When asked why criminal groups would respect the deal's terms, one candidate responded, "If I win, I'll send the cops in and destroy their business. They know not to violate the deal" (Interview 2).

The electoral returns to gatekeeping may be particularly salient in cognitively burdensome elections with many candidates. In such races, few candidates receive press, so in-person strategies are essential (Gay 1993). Candidates who are gatekept out have limited options to shape voter information from afar.

When criminal groups gatekeep, I hypothesize that they will reduce the effective candidate pool in their area. Gatekeeping limits contestation through an informational channel, by privileging information about some candidates and obstructing information about others.

2.2 Voter Corralling

Another way in which criminal brokers affect electoral outcomes is by corralling, or influencing vote choice. My conceptualization, drawn from my interview evidence, builds on decades of research on clientelism in Brazil, beginning with the introduction of the term

8. In Portuguese, *fechar com (alguem)*.

curral eleitoral (electoral corral) that broadly describes the patron-client ties linking rural oligarchs and voters in studies of *coronelismo* (Hagopian 1996; Leal 1949).[9] Clientelism is also an urban phenomenon; scholars have noted its ubiquity in Brazilian cities since before the military dictatorship (Fischer 2008; Leeds and Leeds 1978). The *curral eleitoral* has been associated with a broad range of concepts in *favela* electoral politics that describe both the clientelistic behavior by civic leaders, politicians, or even criminals, as well as their influence over voters (Arias 2006, 2017; Gay 1993, 1999; Leeds 1996; McCann 2014).

I extend this literature by offering a clearer conceptualization of the term corralling and explaining how it is used by criminal groups. Corralling encompasses a range of voter mobilization behaviors, but is predicated on *internal territorial control*. When criminal groups corral, they leverage their militarized and social control over voters and influence vote choice through persuasive or coercive strategies.

When criminal groups corral using persuasive strategies, they draw from their control over civic life to influence vote choice. The criminal groups might offer voters rewards, ranging from vote buying or longer-term promises (Gans-Morse et al. 2014; Stokes et al. 2013). Voters might also be genuinely persuaded by criminal brokers, especially if they share cultural or geographical ties (Auerbach 2020; Auerbach and Thachil 2018; Zarazaga 2015). When criminal groups corral using coercive strategies, they draw from both their control over civic life *and* their access to violence to influence vote choice. The severity of threats varies widely, from terrorizing and even killing voters (e.g., Colombia's paramilitary group tactics in Acemoglu et al. (2013), Steele (2011), and Uribe (2025)) to low level violence or verbal threats (e.g., Albarracín's (2018) "delegation" type). These threats appear to be effective at the group level: threatening a few voters can inspire fear across the community.

9. During the Old Republic (1889-1930), *coroneis* had extensive military and political control over voters. The *coronel* "shepherded his followers to the polls on the backs of farm trucks and instructed them for whom to vote," giving rise to agricultural metaphors ("herd vote" and "electoral corral") to characterize this level of influence (Hagopian 1996, p. 49).

In classic theories of clientelism, monitoring is key to influencing vote choice. My interviews suggest that the monitoring that accompanies criminal corralling operates at the group-level: criminal groups sell the votes "wholesale" of the entire community to their candidate partners.[10] Even in the absence of individual-level monitoring, one candidate claimed, "you can count on having those votes" (Interview 3) delivered by a criminal group, but the same was not true for other clientelistic strategies. One staffer admitted that coercive corralling yielded the most votes vis-a-vis other strategies (Interview 4). Existing studies of *milícias* in Rio de Janeiro also note group-level monitoring behaviors (Cano and Duarte 2012). Individual monitoring is unusual in a case like Brazil with high ballot integrity, and importantly, appears unnecessary, given that group-level threats appear effective.[11] One voter states, "CANDIDATE, in addition to offering money to buy votes, threatens residents that if he discovers that they did not vote, they will suffer the consequences. CANDIDATE is involved with the *milícia*" (Complaint 2).

When criminal groups corral, I hypothesize that they will influence vote choice through persuasion, coercion, or both, even in the absence of individual-level monitoring.

2.3 Gatekeeping and Corralling Reduce Electoral Competition

I argue that gatekeeping, corralling, or their joint use reduces electoral competition. They are not mutually exclusive and can be complementary. While gatekeeping reduces the number of candidates that can access voters, it facilitates election-day corralling for the criminal group's preferred candidate. Voter complaints confirm that they can be used in tandem:

"Today when I went to vote, I was coerced by *milícias* to vote for CANDIDATE.

10. Such "wholesale" agreements have been documented elsewhere when brokers enforce clientelistic bargains at the group level (Gottlieb and Larreguy 2020; Kramon 2019; Rueda 2017).

11. Individual monitoring, such as criminal groups demanding ballot cell phone photos, appears infrequently in the voter complaints.

> Surrounding the polling station there were lots of flyers and stickers for him, at the entrance there were many spread over the floor. He was the only one who came to campaign in my neighborhood" (Complaint 3).

While these two strategies *can* be used together, they are not always. This could be due to different opportunity costs of engaging in either activity given available resources. I test for this possibility by comparing different types of criminal groups with different resource allocations in Rio de Janeiro.

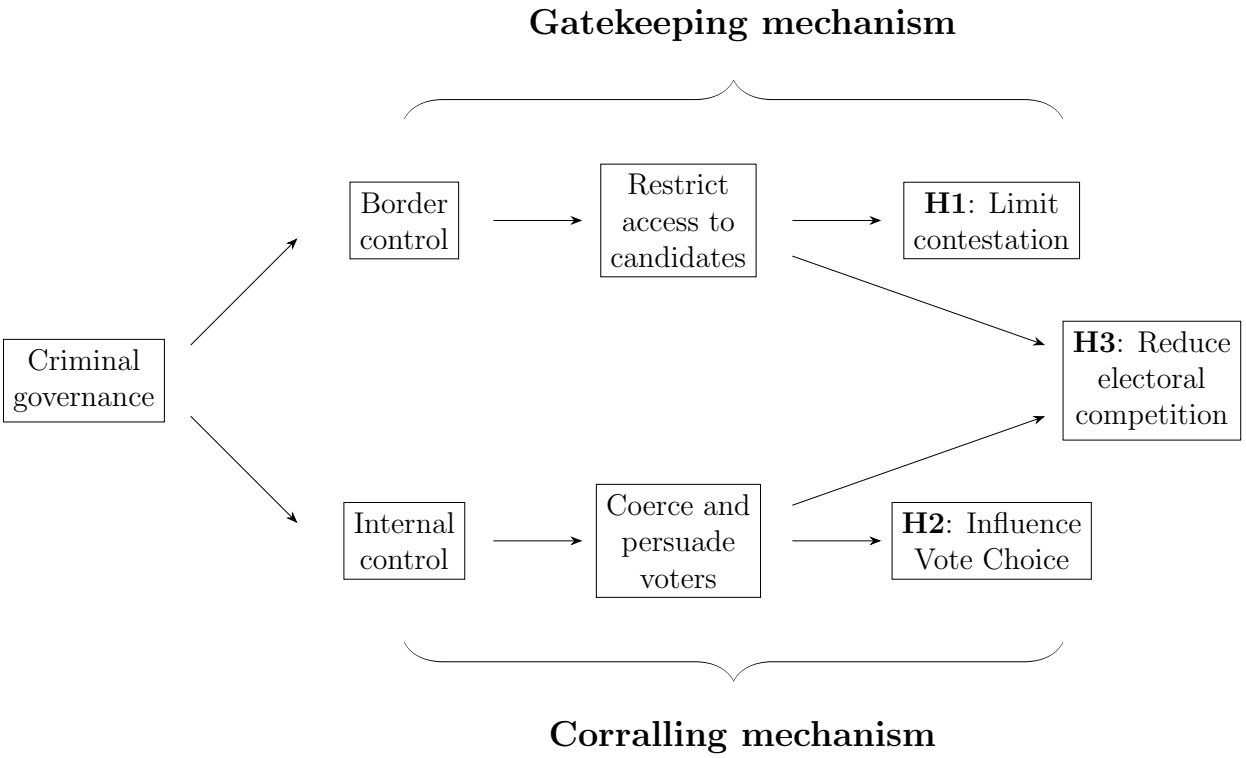
Figure 1 summarizes my argument. This argument rests on four scope conditions: (1) criminal governance is linked to territory; (2) criminal governance is consolidated; (3) criminally governed areas are controlled by a single criminal group, although Section 5.1 explores the theory's applicability to contested territories; and (4) candidate-criminal group deals are broadly defined, encompassing both longstanding deals[12] and short-term opportunistic deals.[13] The terms of criminal brokerage are not in the scope of this paper since *gatekeeping* and *corralling* can be observed across many arrangements.

3 Elections and Organized Crime in Rio de Janeiro

This paper focuses on municipal legislative elections, because a criminal group's support may more easily tip the scale in such contests than in higher-level races. Brazil's electoral rules facilitate intense competition for votes.[14] In the 2016 Rio de Janeiro city council election, 1,628 candidates affiliated with 35 different parties competed for 51 seats. Dozens of marginal candidates won or lost by a few thousand votes.

12. E.g., Sicilian Mafia's alliance with the Christian Democrats (Gambetta 1996).
13. E.g., Indonesian parties and the protection rackets for hire (Tajima 2018)
14. Legislative elections in Brazil use an open-list proportional representation system in multimember districts. All candidates are elected at-large, although many establish informal strongholds (Ames 2009). Parties may each nominate up to 1.5 times the number of seats.

Figure 1: Structure of the Argument



Criminal groups govern between one quarter and one half of the city's 6.74 million inhabitants (Satriano 2020). These voters live in communities of various sizes, primarily *favelas*. *Favelas* are low-income settlements characterized by high population density and varying degrees of social exclusion (Gay 1993; Perlman 2010). There are hundreds of *favelas* scattered throughout the city; they are often contrasted with the surrounding neighborhoods in the formal sector, colloquially "the asphalt." The government neglected residents in favelas long before the birth of today's criminal groups (Fischer 2008; Misse 1999; Zaluar 1994), but these inequalities have widened over decades. Today, most of the city's favelas are governed by organized crime.

Two main categories of criminal groups govern favelas. First, drug trafficking organizations use the favelas they control for business purposes, including storing, transporting, or selling drugs (Arias 2006; Lessing 2017). Each favela is governed by one of three major

syndicates[15] and operates as a decentralized member of a network, like a franchise. The second type of criminal group is vigilante-style extortion rackets, called *milícias* (Cano and Duarte 2012). The *milícias* – often associated with law enforcement – extort residents and businesses for "security" payments and control access to utilities, transportation, and loans. *Milícias* are also decentralized; *milícia* leaders control neighborhood-level protection rackets and coercive power. The decentralized nature of criminal governance means that there are hundreds of "criminal kingdoms" across the city (Arias 2006). Each favela's local leader – trafficker or *milícia* – has significant autonomy in setting the rules in their territory; these governing styles may even vary between favelas governed by the same group (Magaloni, Franco-Vivanco, et al. 2020).

This decentralization also applies to favela electoral politics: if a candidate pays a criminal broker in one favela, this does not purchase access to all favelas dominated by that faction. Local criminal leaders can thus charge a premium for gatekeeping or corralling services, profiting from the decentralized market structure. Candidates are aware that the price of entry doesn't extend far beyond the favela's perimeter. One candidate described paying the gatekeeping fee to safely campaign in a favela, but noted that he did not expect to gain votes in other locations where he did not purchase access (Interview 5).

Criminal-politician ties have made the news in Rio de Janeiro. Most famously, there was a state-level congressional investigation into certain *milícia* groups for their connections to the state, including law enforcement and electoral politics. This investigation, the Parliamentary Inquiry Commission on Milícias (*CPI das Milícias)* occurred in 2008 and led to the high-profile removal of several local and state-level politicians (ALERJ 2008). The 282-page report from the *CPI das Milícias* committee, available to the public, details the ways that the *milícias* practiced gatekeeping and corralling for their candidates' electoral gain, among

15. These are ADA (*Amigos dos Amigos*), CV (*Comando Vermelho*), and TCP (*Terceiro Comando Puro*).

other things.[16]

More recently, journalists have documented criminal gatekeeping and corralling in both *milícia* and drug trafficking favelas. They note that criminal brokers often set a flat rate for gatekeeping rather than charging per vote (Araújo and Otávio 2018), which typically includes exclusive or near-exclusive access to the favela. Many criminal leaders offer additional services to corral residents, such as hosting events or door-to-door canvassing.

4 Research Design

If my theory is correct, when *criminal gatekeeping* and *criminal corralling* occur, I expect to observe the corresponding changes in candidate entry, vote choice, and electoral competition. This section presents the data and empirical strategy.

4.1 Data

4.1.1 Criminal Gatekeeping and Corralling

I construct an original panel database of criminal gatekeeping and corralling in favelas. I use data from *Disque Denúncia*, a non-governmental organization that operates an anonymous 24-hour tip line. They are independent from the police but pass along time-sensitive, life-threatening calls for help to the police, while protecting callers' anonymity. This is a useful source for measuring criminality because *Disque Denúncia*'s anonymity offers callers protection, which encourages reporting.[17] I obtained text summaries and the reported location of each call for approximately 1.45 million calls from 2008 to 2020 within the city of Rio de Janeiro.

16. The report is available here: https://static.poder360.com.br/2024/01/relatorio-final-cpi-das-milicias-marcelo-alerj-2008.pdf.

17. Other studies have validated this data to study criminality in Rio de Janeiro (Magaloni, Franco-Vivanco, et al. 2020; NEV-USP 2019).

I measure the prevalence of *gatekeeping* and *corralling* in the call summaries in five steps, detailed in Appendix A.1. First, I geocode all calls and classify them as inside or outside a favela. Second, I restrict the sample to the campaign season, resulting in 42,889 calls inside favelas during campaigns. Third, I create word lists (see Table A1) for four topics: (1) organized crime, (2) elections, in general, (3) gatekeeping, and (4) corralling. For each call, I code four binary variables indicating whether each topic is mentioned. Fourth, I summarize each topic by favela-year by generating a binary and count variable: the binary variable takes a value of 1 if any call mentions the topic in a given election cycle, and the count variable tallies the calls. Summary statistics are shown in Panels A and B of Table 1. Of note are the values reported in the third column, **SD(w)**, which correspond to the within-polling-place-year standard deviations, the unit and temporal fixed effects in Equation 1, explained in the following section. There is considerable within-variation in the independent variables even after controlling for fixed effects.[18]

Fifth, I construct the *criminal gatekeeping* and *criminal corralling* variables by labeling calls where organized crime co-occurs with either mechanism (Panel C). I use the same process to create binary and count variables. The favela-year binary variable takes a value of 1 if any call mentions both organized crime and corralling or gatekeeping, and the count variable sums the number of calls. To check construct validity, I read and include a random sample of translated, redacted examples in Figures A1 and A2. For example, criminal gatekeeping calls mention "drug traffickers... removing signs and other forms of campaign propaganda from candidates who are not their preferred choices" (Example 1) and criminal corralling calls describe "two individuals... armed and believed to be *milícia* members, are distributing campaign pamphlets to voters" (Example 3).

18. This is consistent with best practices for reporting fixed effects estimators (Mummolo and Peterson 2018).

Table 1: Summary Statistics on Independent and Dependent Variables

Topic	Mean	SD	SD(w)	Min	Max
Panel A: Calls about organized crime topics					
Organized crime (binary)	0.666	0.472	0.337	0	1
Organized crime (count)	15.853	33.653	24.269	0	337
Panel B: Calls about election topics					
Elections, in general (binary)	0.116	0.320	0.241	0	1
Elections, in general (count)	0.649	2.771	2.124	0	26
Gatekeeping (binary)	0.057	0.232	0.177	0	1
Gatekeeping (count)	0.257	1.350	1.094	0	14
Corralling (binary)	0.036	0.186	0.144	0	1
Corralling (count)	0.110	0.719	0.532	0	8
Panel C: Calls about organized crime *and* election topics					
Criminal gatekeeping (binary)	0.050	0.217	0.165	0	1
Criminal gatekeeping (count)	0.239	1.336	1.090	0	14
Criminal corralling (binary)	0.027	0.161	0.118	0	1
Criminal corralling (count)	0.092	0.676	0.505	0	8
Panel D: Electoral dependent variables					
Gatekeeping: N Candidates receiving votes	108.680	17.978	12.030	22	192
Corralling: Vote choice (Milicia)	0.072	0.259	0.181	0	1
Corralling: Vote choice (All)	0.173	0.378	0.273	0	1
Competition: HHI (log)	-3.147	0.396	0.229	-4.444	-0.896

Note: Panels A-C use data from *Disque Denúncia*; variable creation described in Appendix A.1. The data in Panel D is from the *Tribunal Supremo Eleitoral* (TSE). $N = 29,156$. SD(w) corresponds to the within-polling-place-year standard deviations.

4.1.2 Electoral Outcomes

To calculate electoral outcomes, I create an original dataset drawing from voting-booth-level returns from the Supreme Electoral Court (TSE). The voting booth is the smallest unit at which results are reported; approximately 300-500 people vote per booth. Panel D of Table 1 lists the summary statistics for the main dependent variables, and their distributions are shown in Figure F1.

The first outcome focuses on the observable implications of candidate gatekeeping, measuring whether criminal groups are reducing the effective candidate pool in favelas. I opera-

tionalize this by summing the number of candidates that receive at least one vote per booth. Given that there are more candidates in the race than voters per booth, it is statistically impossible for all candidates to receive a vote.

The second and third outcomes are observable implications of voter corralling (see Appendix B for more details on both measures). First, "Vote choice (*Milícia*)" measures whether *milícia*-affiliated candidates receive the most votes per voting booth. I collected a list of 18 names of Rio de Janeiro city council candidates mentioned in the unredacted *CPI das Milícias* report (see Section 3), which I then link to their electoral returns. "Vote choice (*Milícia*)" is a binary indicator that measures whether an (alleged) *milícia*-affiliated candidate received the most votes at a voting booth.

The third outcome takes a similar approach. "Vote choice (all)" measures whether *any* candidates with suspected ties to criminal groups receive the most votes in a voting booth. I hand-coded each candidate complained about in the *Disque Denúncia* calls. This metric includes 35 candidates: all 18 candidates in the *CPI das Milícias* report and 17 additional candidates that have alleged relationships with *milícias* or drug trafficking gangs. I create a binary indicator that measures whether any of these 35 candidates received the most votes at a voting booth.

The benefits of measuring corralling using the first measure are that it is sourced from a public document whose findings have been used widely in social science research (Hidalgo and Lessing 2019; Paes Manso 2020; Pantaleão and Montini 2025). However, it only measures supposed *milícia* ties. The benefits of using the *Disque Denúncia* measure is that it includes candidates with ties to both group types. The disadvantages of this measure are that the names cannot be disclosed for data confidentiality restrictions, and that voter complaints likely underestimate the true incidence. Though neither measure is without flaws, measuring criminal influence over vote choice is a difficult construct to capture, and together, they illuminate various aspects of such influence.

The fourth outcome is a summary indicator of electoral competition, resulting from gatekeeping, corralling, or both. I use the Herfindahl-Hirschman index (HHI), a standard measure of monopoly concentration in electoral studies. For every voting booth b, I construct the HHI by summing the share of votes received (v_c) of all candidates $c \in \{1, ...n\}$ who ran for city council in a given year:

$$HHI_b = \sum_{c=1}^{n} v_c^2$$

Larger values of HHI_b mean that one candidate receives a disproportionately high share of the votes per booth. All specifications use the logged HHI_b to reduce skew.

Together, these outcomes paint a complete picture of the relationship between criminal governance and voting. If they move as predicted, they demonstrate that the electoral race is growing less competitive as votes are being redirected from low vote-earners to criminally-connected candidates.

4.1.3 Control Variables

I address concerns about omitted variable bias by including observable controls that might confound the relationship between gatekeeping or corralling and electoral outcomes (see Appendix C for details). First, I control for the dominant criminal faction(s) in the favela for each election-year, to address concerns that gatekeeping or corralling is only practiced by certain criminal group types. To generate this variable, I construct an original dataset at the favela-year level that measures the governing faction, using the same *Disque Denúncia* complaints described in greater detail in Appendix C.1. I include indicators for the **CV**, **ADA**, **TCP**, and **Milícia** criminal groups, and an additional "**Criminal Conflict**" indicator variable if the favela has an active conflict during the election. I conditition secondary analyses on group type throughout Section 5.

Second, I add other favela controls: 1) population, since organized crime might be

stronger in larger favelas; 2) the distance to the polling station of interest, because criminal groups might have more influence nearby; and 3) favela income per capita, since there is considerable heterogeneity in wealth between favelas *and* since poverty is an important predictor of clientelism. Third, I control for ballot-box-level voter characteristics to address potentially confounding variables that can influence participation or susceptibility to clientelism, including 1) age, 2) education level, 3) gender, and 4) civil status.

4.2 Empirical Strategy

I use as-if random evidence to estimate the association between criminal gatekeeping or criminal corralling and voting. A key assumption underpinning this paper's empirical strategy is that criminal governance is restricted to Rio de Janeiro's favelas.[19] This paper exploits exogenous variation in voting booth assignment to demonstrate that favela residents' voting behavior differs from their neighbors' on the asphalt, and that these differences are especially pronounced in favelas where criminal gatekeeping and corralling occur.

I approximate random assignment to the criminal gatekeeping or criminal corralling "treatment" by leveraging Brazil's exogenous voting booth assignment procedure, explained in more detail in Appendix D and summarized below. First, when voters register, they choose the polling station where they want to vote, as long as it is in their electoral district.[20] Most choose polling stations close to their homes (e.g., a nearby primary school). Second, once assigned to their polling station, voters are randomly assigned to one of many voting booths

19. While criminal governance is not necessarily a feature of *all* favelas, criminal groups govern most favelas. Criminal control extends to, but rarely beyond, the favela boundary. Decades of qualitative work has documented different voting patterns between favela and non-favela ("the asphalt") residents (Gay 1993, 1999; Holston 2009; Perlman 2010). The *Disque Denúncia* calls support this assumption. Few election-related calls located on "the asphalt" are about organized crime, and 96% of them were located within 500 meters of a favela.

20. The electoral districts, *zonas eleitorais*, are federal reporting units encompassing many polling stations.

within their selected polling station through a federal-level electronic assignment procedure. The software aims for an equal number of voters across booths in a polling station, and randomly assigns new registrants accordingly.[21] New voting booths are created if existing ones are at capacity. Voting booth assignment carries over year-to-year unless they change their registration or become inactive.

The implications of this assignment process are that voters who live in the same favela vote at many nearby locations, and intermingle with asphalt residents at the voting booth. Importantly, this also means that different voting booths – in the same polling place – will have different proportions of voters that reside in favelas. This imbalance is exogenously determined. Generally, polling stations are not located inside of favelas due to accessibility and building code standards, so favela residents must leave their communities to vote.

Favela voters comprise the treatment group. I use new data, obtained from an information request, to look *within* the voting booth and measure the share of voters who live in a favela. For every voting booth, I obtained a number between 0 and 1, indicating the proportion of favela residents assigned to vote there. I leverage the exogenous imbalance that results from as-if-random voting booth assignment, which allows me to precisely quantify how favela resident presence in a voting booth affects voting, as if it were a natural experiment. This design solves the ecological inference problem by leveraging the as-if-random fraction of favela voters casting ballots in each voting booth, yielding the most precise known estimates of favela voting behavior. Equation 1 shows the model used to leverage this exogenous imbalance in voter assignment:

$$Y_{it} = \alpha + \gamma(ShareFavela_i \times DD_{it}) + \eta\mathbf{X} + \pi_p + \phi_t + \epsilon_{i,p} \tag{1}$$

In this equation, i and t correspond to each voting booth and election year, respectively,

21. Resolution N. 23.544 of the *Tribunal Supremo Eleitoral*, Articles. 41, 44, and 66.

and Y_{it} represents one of the four electoral outcomes. $ShareFavela_i$ is the share of voters at each booth who live in its most represented favela. $ShareFavela_i$ is logged to reduce skew. The main independent variable, DD_{it}, is an indicator which takes on a value of 1 if there are *Disque Denúncia* reports of criminal gatekeeping or criminal corralling from the favela with the highest share of voters at the voting booth. I also estimate models where DD_{it} is a count variable. γ is the coefficient of interest. I include a vector of favela- and ballot-box-level control variables ($\mathbf{X}$), and polling station (π_p) and election-year intercepts (ϕ_t), and cluster standard errors at the level of randomization, the polling-station-level (p). The fixed effects control for unobserved, time-invariant characteristics at the polling station level, and for time-specific shocks from election to election.

5 Results

Table 2 summarizes the mechanism-specific results, reporting the interactive effects of favela residency with criminal gatekeeping or criminal corralling (γ) on voting. Odd-numbered models use the binary variable and even-numbered models use the count variable for criminal gatekeeping or criminal corralling. The unit of analysis in all models is the voting booth, pooled across the 2008, 2012, 2016, and 2020 elections.

Column 1 shows that fewer candidates receive votes when criminal gatekeeping occurs at the local favela, when favela residents comprise a larger share of the booth's voters, and when these factors interact. On average, 5.45 fewer candidates receive votes when criminal gatekeeping is present, and this further decreases as the share of favela residents at the voting booth increases. All else equal, in the presence of criminal gatekeeping, one fewer candidate receives votes in booths with a high (75%) versus low (25%) share of favela voters.

Column 2 suggests that gatekeeping also operates on the intensive margin. A one standard deviation increase in the residualized interaction of *ShareFavela* and gatekeeping (SD

Table 2: Criminal Gatekeeping and Criminal Corralling on Voting

	H1: Gatekeeping		**H2: Corralling**			
	N Candidates		Vote share (*Milícia*)		Vote share (all)	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
$\gamma_{Crim\_Gatekeeping}$	-0.946^{*}	-0.244^{*}				
	(0.467)	(0.110)				
Crim. Gatekeeping	-4.503^{**}	-1.188^{**}				
	(1.500)	(0.364)				
$\gamma_{Crim\_Corralling}$			0.064^{**}	0.015^{**}	0.037^{+}	0.021^{**}
			(0.021)	(0.006)	(0.021)	(0.007)
Crim. Corralling			0.199^{**}	0.036^{*}	0.409^{***}	0.119^{***}
			(0.068)	(0.016)	(0.078)	(0.018)
Share Favela	-1.983^{***}	-1.974^{***}	0.002	0.002	-0.003	-0.004
	(0.321)	(0.320)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.008)	(0.008)
Criminal Governance Controls						
ADA Faction	1.703^{+}	2.009^{*}	-0.034	-0.028	-0.019	-0.029
	(0.977)	(0.975)	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.030)	(0.030)
CV Faction	-0.120	-0.118	-0.002	-0.004	0.026	0.025
	(0.640)	(0.641)	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.024)	(0.024)
TCP Faction	-0.920	-0.891	0.016	0.017	0.076^{**}	0.074^{*}
	(0.745)	(0.745)	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.029)	(0.029)
Milícia Groups	0.825	0.825	-0.019	-0.018	-0.042^{*}	-0.042^{*}
	(0.510)	(0.511)	(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.020)	(0.020)
Criminal Conflict	0.197	0.297	-0.009	-0.009	0.008	0.004
	(1.441)	(1.434)	(0.023)	(0.023)	(0.028)	(0.028)
Num.Obs.	28,991	28,991	28,991	28,991	28,991	28,991
R^2	0.573	0.574	0.518	0.517	0.494	0.492
Main IV	Binary	Count	Binary	Count	Binary	Count
Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Station FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Booth Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Favela Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Note: *ShareFavela* is logged. Dependent variables listed as column headers. The unit of analysis is the voting-booth-year. Standard errors are clustered at the polling station level: 1,378 clusters. $^{+}p < 0.1$, $^{*}p < 0.05$, $^{**}p < 0.01$, $^{***}p < 0.001$.

= 2.96) corresponds to 0.71 fewer candidates receiving votes.[22] Though these are small increases vis-a-vis the outcome's mean, they are substantively meaningful, given that the fixed effects alone explain 85.9% of the variation in the outcome. These findings support the argument that criminal groups restrict candidate entry by gatekeeping, and that fewer candidates receive votes when the incidence of gatekeeping is higher. When holding the share of favela residents constant across voting booths, the presence of gatekeeping is systematically associated with a narrower candidate pool.

Columns 3 and 4 suggest that criminal corralling can influence vote choice. Where criminal corralling is present, there is a 6.4 percentage point increase in the probability that a candidate named in the *CPI das Milícias* wins the most votes at the voting booth, all else equal. This is significant on the intensive margin as well; a one standard deviation increase in the residualized interaction term (SD = 1.76) corresponds to a 2.6 percentage point increase in the probability of winning the voting booth. Substantively, this is consistent with the evidence in the *CPI das Milícias* report. While the report documented over 171 *milícia*-dominated communities across Rio de Janeiro with various ties to public institutions, these ties were deeper in certain *milícia*-dominated favelas than others (ALERJ 2008), notably, the *Rio das Pedras* favela. In my data, *Rio das Pedras* consistently registers the most reports of criminal corralling each year, alongside the most populous trafficker-dominated favela, *Rocinha*. This supports the theory that the presence of criminal corralling influences vote choice, and that higher levels of criminal corralling are even more effective.

Columns 5 and 6 provide further supporting evidence that criminal corralling can influence vote choice for a broader range of candidates. All else equal, there is a 3.7 percentage point increase in the probability that a candidate identified in *Disque Denúncia* reports will win the most votes in a voting booth when criminal corralling is present. As with the

22. I residualize the treatment with respect to polling station and election-year fixed effects to provide a plausible counterfactual increase in the treatment variable, as in Mummolo and Peterson (2018).

outcome related to *milícia*-affiliated candidates, Column 6 shows that higher levels of criminal corralling are also strongly correlated with the probability of victory for *any* alleged criminally-connected candidate. All results in Table 2 are robust to the exclusion of faction, favela, and demographic controls (Table F1).

I then present the point estimates for the control variables by criminal faction. No clear patterns emerge across all models, though Columns 5-6 show that one drug trafficking faction and *milícia* groups are positively and negatively correlated with vote choice, respectively. These point estimates may be puzzling, given that *milícia* groups are often associated with corralling behaviors (Cano and Duarte 2012). Several studies suggest that *milícias*, who are more deeply embedded in the state, have more of an incentive to engage in electoral politics than traffickers and have more resources to do so, given their connections to various state agencies (Hidalgo and Lessing 2019; Paes Manso 2020).

In Table 3, I condition the analysis by faction to examine the relationship between voting and gatekeeping or corralling within and across criminal groups. Panels A and B report the results for the sample of *milícia*- and trafficker-dominated favelas, respectively. Columns 1 and 2 suggest that criminal gatekeeping is correlated with a restricted candidate pool in favelas governed by both types, although the effect size is larger and stronger for voters residing in *milícia*-dominated favelas. The results in Column 3 demonstrates that the presence of criminal corralling is highly correlated with a *milícia*-affiliated candidate winning in *milícia*-dominated areas (a 12.5 percentage point increase in the probability of winning the voting booth), but is uncorrelated with winning in trafficker-dominated voting booths. Finally, Columns 5 and 6 show that when the dependent variable of interest captures vote choice for a wider range of criminally-connected candidates, including candidates affiliated with traffickers, there is no longer a strong association between criminal corralling in *milícia*-dominated favelas (Panel A). Within trafficker-dominated favelas, there is a positive and significant relationship between the frequency of criminal corralling and criminally-affiliated candidates

Table 3: Criminal Gatekeeping and Criminal Corralling on Voting, by Faction

	H1: Gatekeeping		**H2: Corralling**			
	N Candidates		Vote share (*Milícia*)		Vote share (all)	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
			Panel A: *Milícia* groups			
$\gamma_{Crim\_Gatekeeping}$	-1.928^{*}	$-0.354+$				
	(0.814)	(0.211)				
Crim. Gatekeeping	-4.809^{*}	-0.826				
	(2.314)	(0.550)				
$\gamma_{Crim\_Corralling}$			0.125^{***}	0.034^{***}	-0.032	-0.025
			(0.020)	(0.006)	(0.030)	(0.022)
Crim. Corralling			0.345^{***}	0.092^{***}	0.245^{***}	0.004
			(0.055)	(0.011)	(0.071)	(0.021)
Share Favela	-1.835^{**}	-1.831^{**}	0.030	0.031	0.019	0.020
	(0.626)	(0.627)	(0.020)	(0.020)	(0.014)	(0.014)
Num.Obs.	11,454	11,454	11,454	11,454	11,454	11,454
R^2	0.609	0.609	0.556	0.554	0.558	0.552
			Panel B: Trafficking groups			
$\gamma_{Crim\_Gatekeeping}$	-0.619	-0.315^{**}				
	(0.608)	(0.111)				
Crim. Gatekeeping	-5.271^{**}	-1.940^{***}				
	(2.042)	(0.348)				
$\gamma_{Crim\_Corralling}$			-0.003	-0.001	0.064	0.036^{***}
			(0.006)	(0.001)	(0.043)	(0.007)
Crim. Corralling			-0.003	-0.002	0.502^{**}	0.183^{***}
			(0.014)	(0.003)	(0.166)	(0.020)
Share Favela	-2.888^{***}	-2.843^{***}	-0.003	-0.003	-0.004	-0.005
	(0.535)	(0.531)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.005)	(0.005)
Num.Obs.	13,352	13 352	13 352	13 352	13 352	13 352
R^2	0.590	0.596	0.748	0.748	0.616	0.634
Main IV	Binary	Count	Binary	Count	Binary	Count
Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Station FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Booth Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Favela Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Note: *ShareFavela* is logged. Dependent variables listed as column headers. The unit of analysis is the voting-booth-year. The models in Panel B also include control variables for type of drug trafficking faction. Standard errors are clustered at the polling station level: 1,378 clusters. $^{+}p < 0.1$, $^{*}p < 0.05$, $^{**}p < 0.01$, $^{***}p < 0.001$.

winning at the voting booth (Column 6, Panel B). A one standard deviation increase in the residualized $\gamma_{Crim\_Corralling}$ (SD = 1.87) corresponds to a 5.6 percentage point increase in the probability a candidate complained about in *Disque Denúncia* wins a trafficker-dominated voting booth.

These models serve the additional purpose of validating the criminal governance data, since we would expect candidates named in the *CPI das Milícias* to do well in *milícia*-dominated favelas, and for the more expansive "Vote share (all)" variable to be a better predictor of criminally-influenced vote choice in trafficker-dominated areas. There are two important takeaways from these models: even within criminal groups under the same banner, 1) there is substantial variation in gatekeeping and corralling, and 2) this variation maps onto the predicted outcomes, even within groups. Though the magnitude of the coefficients suggests that *milícias* might engage in these behaviors more – or do so more effectively – I find evidence supporting my theory that both *milícias* and traffickers can and do pursue both strategies to varying degrees.

Table 4 demonstrates that gatekeeping and corralling are also associated with the summary outcome, reduced competition at the voting booth. I test the relationship between competition and gatekeeping (Columns 1-2), corralling (Columns 3-4), or both (Columns 5-6). All models suggest that the incidence and intensity of gatekeeping and corralling are significantly correlated with lower competition. Holding the logged *ShareFavela* constant at its mean (approximately one in ten voters residing in a favela) and all else constant, the presence of criminal gatekeeping corresponds to a 28.8 percentage point increase in the predicted HHI, representing a significant tilting of the playing field. When repeating the same exercise for corralling (Column 3), the reduction in competition more than doubles, corresponding to a 65.3 percentage point increase in vote concentration. The least competitive local elections are those where both gatekeeping and corralling are present. Column 5 supports the claim that the mechanisms can be complementary, and their joint use has a compound effect on

Table 4: Criminal Gatekeeping and Criminal Corralling on Electoral Competition

	H3: Electoral Competition (DV: HHI)					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
$\gamma_{Crim\_Gatekeeping}$	0.057***	0.011**			0.060***	0.003
	(0.013)	(0.004)			(0.012)	(0.002)
Crim. Gatekeeping	0.247***	0.052***			0.207***	0.005
	(0.047)	(0.013)			(0.044)	(0.007)
$\gamma_{Crim\_Corralling}$			0.093***	0.051***	0.072***	0.046***
			(0.020)	(0.011)	(0.020)	(0.013)
Crim. Corralling			0.493***	0.225***	0.432***	0.218***
			(0.076)	(0.032)	(0.076)	(0.036)
Share Favela	0.015*	0.015*	0.017**	0.016*	0.014*	0.016*
	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)
Num.Obs.	28,991	28,991	28,991	28,991	28,991	28,991
R^2	0.681	0.682	0.685	0.697	0.687	0.697
Main IV	Binary	Count	Binary	Count	Binary	Count
Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Station FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Booth Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Favela Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Note: Dependent variable (HHI) and *ShareFavela* are logged. The unit of analysis is the voting-booth-year. Standard errors are clustered at the polling station level: 1,378 clusters. $^{+}p < 0.1$, $^{*}p < 0.05$, $^{**}p < 0.01$, $^{***}p < 0.001$.

competition. However, both Columns 5 and 6 suggest that corralling has a more influential relationship with electoral competition than gatekeeping. This is intuitive; I would expect corralling to have a stronger effect on vote choice than criminal regulation of the information environment, especially if corralling is coercive and violent.

These associations hold when considering electoral competition separately for *milícia* and trafficking groups. Panel A of Table 5 shows that gatekeeping in *milícia*-dominated favelas is significantly correlated with lower levels of competition, corralling is even more so, and elections are least competitive when both mechanisms are present. Panel B suggests that both gatekeeping and corralling are associated with lower competition in trafficker-dominated favelas, but to a lesser extent, especially for corralling, which is only weakly predictive of lower

competition (Column 3, Panel B). In trafficker-dominated favelas, corralling is subsumed by the stronger relationship between gatekeeping and competition when both are present (Colums 5-6). This is not to say that traffickers cannot reduce competition or sway vote choice, but rather, they may not be able to reduce competition to the extent that *milícia* groups are, which is in line with existing evidence about *milícia*'s connections to the state's apparatus. Though out of the scope of this paper, future work could probe the results in Tables 3 and 5 to explore whether the level of gatekeeping or corralling is a function of criminal group resources and opportunity costs.

As with any natural experiment, there is a risk that pre-treatment confounders may drive the results. The stability of the results after controlling for favela- and voting-booth-level factors suggests that existing explanations related to poverty, demographics, or specific criminal factions – even between favelas – do not fully account for the differences in voting amid gatekeeping and corralling. Further, the inclusion of yearly and polling-station-level fixed effects minimizes concerns that key differences between polling stations or years are driving the relationship between voting behavior and gatekeeping or corralling.

5.1 Robustness and Validity Checks

I conduct a range of additional tests to probe these results, beginning with sensitivity tests of the independent variables. The validity of the independent variables depends on accurate and unbiased reporting to *Disque Denúncia*. I assume that gatekeeping and corralling are underreported, as is the case with most reported crime or malfeasance. This means that my measures are likely conservative estimates of their true incidence, and may be undercounting gatekeeping or corralling in communities where voters do not call. A conservative interpretation of the main independent variables is that they are identifying the favelas where

Table 5: Criminal Gatekeeping and Criminal Corralling on Electoral Competition, by Faction

	H3: Electoral Competition (DV: HHI)					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Panel A: *Milícia* groups					
$\gamma_{Crim\_Gatekeeping}$	0.110***	0.022**			0.086***	0.005*
	(0.021)	(0.008)			(0.022)	(0.002)
Crim. Gatekeeping	0.323***	0.058**			0.247***	0.006
	(0.066)	(0.022)			(0.069)	(0.007)
$\gamma_{Crim\_Corralling}$			0.201***	0.105***	0.182***	0.101***
			(0.037)	(0.015)	(0.040)	(0.015)
Crim. Corralling			0.593***	0.361***	0.535***	0.357***
			(0.076)	(0.023)	(0.080)	(0.023)
Share Favela	0.012	0.012	0.013	0.011	0.010	0.010
	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.009)
Num.Obs.	11,454	11,454	11,454	11,454	11,454	11,454
R^2	0.724	0.722	0.729	0.748	0.732	0.749
	Panel B: Trafficking groups					
$\gamma_{Crim\_Gatekeeping}$	0.036*	0.009**			0.057***	0.011***
	(0.017)	(0.003)			(0.017)	(0.003)
Crim. Gatekeeping	0.248***	0.063***			0.242***	0.035***
	(0.063)	(0.010)			(0.055)	(0.010)
$\gamma_{Crim\_Corralling}$			0.062+	0.020***	0.043	0.004
			(0.034)	(0.005)	(0.033)	(0.007)
Crim. Corralling			0.453***	0.135***	0.380**	0.086***
			(0.128)	(0.017)	(0.117)	(0.020)
Share Favela	0.027*	0.027*	0.030**	0.030**	0.026*	0.028**
	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.010)	(0.011)
Num.Obs.	13,352	13,352	13,352	13,352	13,352	13,352
R^2	0.715	0.725	0.718	0.730	0.722	0.731

Note: Dependent variable (HHI) and *ShareFavela* are logged. The unit of analysis is the voting-booth-year. The models in Panel B also include control variables for the type of drug trafficking faction. Standard errors are clustered at the polling station level: 1,378 clusters. $^{+}p < 0.1$, $^{*}p < 0.05$, $^{**}p < 0.01$, $^{***}p < 0.001$.

gatekeeping or corralling is most egregious.[23] If true, a valid interpretation of the main findings is about incidence of *a high enough level* of gatekeeping or corralling that prompts voters to call. The following tests take these concerns into account.

One threat to inference is that the independent variables are identifying favelas which are simply more engaged in politics, and this is a story about favela politics rather than criminal politics. I replace the corralling and gatekeeping measures with measures of general electoral activity in favelas.[24] Table F2 shows that general electoral activity is inversely correlated with the number of candidates receiving votes and with competition, consistent with the main findings. This suggests that favelas that are more active in politics might also have a tendency to vote in bloc. However, these point estimates are much smaller than those in the main results, suggesting that electoral activity is not singularly responsible for the main findings. Further, there is not a positive relationship between favela electoral activity and vote choice for criminally-affiliated candidates. This suggests that general electoral activity, in general, does not explain all the variation in voting outcomes.

Table F3 then considers whether the electoral outcomes are a result of gatekeeping and corralling, in general, rather than their specific use by criminal groups.[25] These results are similar in significance and direction to the main findings, but much smaller in magnitude for all four outcome variables. I interpret these findings as suggesting that gatekeeping and corralling behaviors, when practiced by other brokers, can be successful – but not to the extent as when they are practiced by criminal groups. This supports my argument about how territorial control gives criminal groups efficiency advantages over competing brokers.

23. Public security professionals suggest that the population calls *Disque Denúncia* to complain only when "things are really bad." (Interview 6).

24. A complaint about general electoral activity (detailed in Table A1) states, "In the referenced neighborhood, candidates *NAME* and *NAME* are holding parades by car, with boom boxes playing very loud music" (Complaint 4).

25. A complaint about general *corralling* states: "Near *PRIMARY SCHOOL*, there are close to fifteen people buying votes. They are paying R$70 to voters to vote for their candidate *NAME*" (Complaint 5).

Another concern is that the word lists used to generate the variables for criminal gatekeeping or criminal corralling are arbitrary, incomplete, or biased.[26] I cross-validate my primary independent variables with others less reliant on researcher choice. I fit a structural topic model on the corpus of *Disque Denúncia* calls (Roberts et al. 2015) and select the topic about elections, described in greater detail in Appendix A3. I measure whether "Topic 6: Elections" calls occur for each favela-year observation, then re-estimate the models in Table F4. While the coefficients are smaller, the sign and significance for gatekeeping, the second corralling variable, and electoral competition are consistent with the main results.

I then conduct sensitivity tests of the dependent variables. In Table F5, I operationalize gatekeeping as the number of candidates receiving five or more votes, and find support for my main results. For corralling, I remove the candidates identified in the *CPI das Milícias* from my list of names in *Disque Denúncia*. I re-estimate the criminal corralling models using vote choice for this subset of criminally-associated candidates as an outcome indicator, first for the full sample (Columns 3-4) then for the subset of voting booths where residents living under traffickers vote. Vote choice for this list of candidates is strongly and positively correlated with trafficker-dominated areas, suggesting that many of the named candidates in the confidential *denúncias* are indeed associated with drug trafficking gangs. Then, as a substitute for HHI, I measure the share of votes the leading candidate in the voting booth receives. Both gatekeeping and corralling are significant predictors of winning by a larger margin.

While the main argument focuses on consolidated territorial control, certain favelas are only under tenuous criminal control, and the governing faction switches hands frequently. In Table F6, I restrict the sample to favelas that experienced contested authority in the six months prior to the election.[27] Gatekeeping has a large and negative association with the

26. For example, it is common to use euphemisms instead of the faction names that frustrate attempts to classify text.

27. See Appendix C.1 for how I identified those favelas with recent conflict.

number of candidates receiving votes (Columns 1 and 2, Panel A), an effect size that is much larger than that in favelas that have not experienced recent conflict. These models could plausibly be picking up other patterns as candidates fear for their safety or conflict resurgence (Gallego 2018b; Gutiérrez Sanín 2015). The coefficients for corralling (Columns 3-6, Panel A) and electoral competition (Panel B) are indistinguishable from zero at conventional levels, suggesting that voter mobilization in active conflict settings looks different than the dynamics described in this paper.

Lastly, the geographic fuzziness in voter assignment has been an obstacle in past studies, and my design increases the precision in measures of favela voting.[28] My approach reveals that favela and asphalt residents intermingle at the voting booth, even in polling stations closest to favela boundaries. I restrict the sample to voting booths within 500 meters of the closest favela. Table F7 shows that even "inside" the buffer, variation in *ShareFavela* and gatekeeping or corralling map onto my predicted outcomes, despite the reduced sample size. In fact, there is stronger evidence that corralling is associated with votes for a *milícia*-affiliated candidate (Column 2) in these polling stations.

These results show that criminal gatekeeping is strongly associated with reduced electoral contestation, criminal corralling is strongly associated with vote choice for both *milícia* and trafficker-affiliated candidates, and both mechanisms are strongly associated with lower electoral competition. These findings hold when conditioning on criminal group type and testing the sensitivity of both dependent and independent variables. While this analysis cannot, with certainty, separate the effects of favela residency from living under criminal governance, these tests show that within-favela variation (controls for geographic location, socioeconomic status, size, and governing criminal faction), and the clientelistic voter mobilization strategies associated with favelas (see Tables F2 and F3) alone do not explain the

28. Past studies have attempted to overcome this problem by classifying polling stations as either inside or outside of a favela's buffer zone (Hidalgo and Lessing 2019; Nascimento 2017)

persistent relationship between criminal gatekeeping or criminal corralling, and voting.

6 Discussion

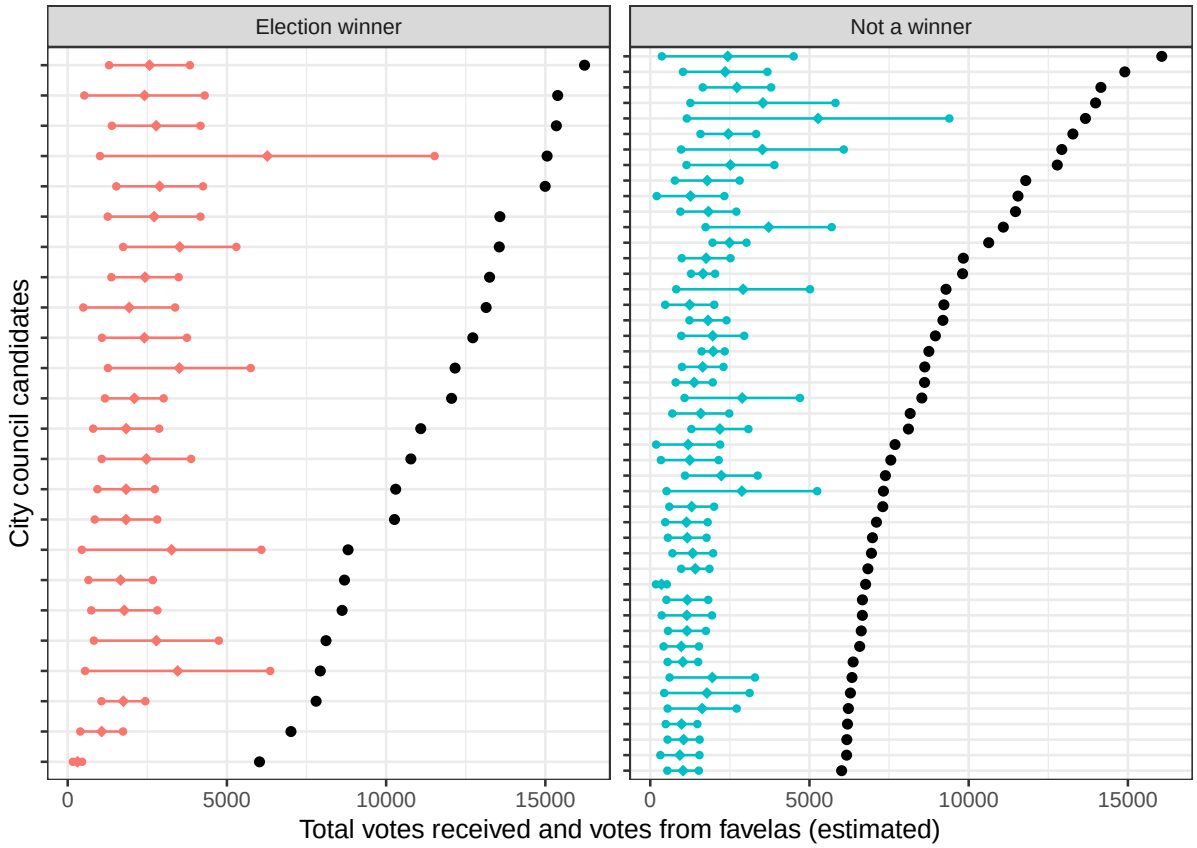
Overall, these results establish a strong inverse relationship between criminal gatekeeping and corralling and electoral competitiveness at the voting-booth-level. What is the impact of gatekeeping or corralling on elections beyond the voting booth? It is challenging to calculate how many votes candidates get from favelas, due to the voter assignment procedure. Even candidates are uninformed; a campaign manager admitted that the geographic fuzziness in voter assignment made it too difficult for their team to observe campaign performance below the neighborhood level (Interview 7).

Despite these data limitations, I estimate the favela votes that anonymized *marginal* candidates received, using the 2016 election as a test case. Figure 2 plots the total votes received for 71 marginal candidates (24 winning and 47 losing candidates) alongside an estimated range of favela votes received.[29] I define a candidate as *marginal* if they received more votes than the highest-earning losing candidate (16,064 votes), but fewer than the lowest-earning winning candidate (6,023 votes). Given their precarious position, I expect that marginal candidates are most likely to benefit from gatekeeping and corralling. I estimate that marginal candidates receive, on average, 21% of their votes from criminally governed favela residents.

I then estimate back-of-the-envelope calculations of whether the favela votes were decisive in securing victory for the marginal winners. The open list system complicates the construction of counterfactual election outcomes, but I draw some aggregate conclusions. First, seven winners (14% of the city council) definitely would not have won without favela votes, and the redistribution of these votes to other candidates would have led them to lose.

29. These estimations are described in Appendix E.

Figure 2: Favela Votes as a Share of Candidates' Total Votes, 2016



Note: Marginal candidates are anonymized and sorted by most votes received to least. The points between the errorbars represent the estimated upper, lower, and mean favela votes received, and points on the right represent the total votes earned.

Second, seven others won by even narrower margins due to 2,000 or fewer favela votes. Even a partial redistribution of their favela votes – or a change in the total votes received by their party – would have cost them the race.

In sum, slightly more than a quarter (14 seats, 27%) of city council winners' seats could easily be lost without the support of all or some favela voters, often at margins so thin that n = 2,000 votes could make the difference between winning and losing. These 14 candidates who eked out a victory were also more likely to be complained about by voters to *Disque Denúncia* than other winners. In one egregious case, voters complained about a candidate 53 times; nearly all complaints mentioned the use of criminal brokers.

7 Conclusion

Politicians all over the world call on criminal groups to help win elections. Criminal groups that govern can effectively marshal their territorial control to influence voters, which candidates seek. This paper argues that politicians hire criminal groups as brokers, paying for their capacity to deliver votes by *gatekeeping* rival candidates and *corralling* voters. I offer empirical evidence of both gatekeeping and corralling, showing a persistent and strong relationship between gatekeeping and reduced contestation, and corralling and vote choice, for both *milícia*-affiliated and trafficker-affiliated candidates. This paper also demonstrates that both mechanisms are associated with reduced electoral competition, and explores the use and efficacy of either mechanism by different criminal group types.

This paper reveals how criminal groups derive power from *border* and *internal* territorial control, and use it to gatekeep and corral. Past research argues that criminal groups that want to influence electoral outcomes strategically use bribes or vote buying (Albarracín 2018; Arias 2006, 2017; Blume 2022; Gay 1999; Gutiérrez Sanín 2015) or violence (Acemoglu et al. 2013; Alesina et al. 2019; Córdova 2019; Daniele and Dipoppa 2017; Dell 2015; Steele 2011; Trejo and Ley 2019; Uribe 2025). But this is only part of the story. Undergirding their ability to deploy bribes or violence effectively is their control over territory. Criminal groups leverage their control over borders to gatekeep, limiting candidates' access to voters to those that pay up. Gatekeeping effectively prunes rival candidates from the candidate pool. Criminal groups corral by issuing threats and rewards to voters that are rooted in their internal control of neighborhoods. These threats and rewards influence vote choice on Election Day. Future research should investigate the medium- and long-term consequences of these electioneering tactics, and which candidates use them.

Rio de Janeiro is a microcosm in which we can observe criminal governance and candidate competition at the sub-municipal level. While this paper focuses on local dynamics, it also

generates predictions about criminal governance and electoral politics in other contexts. I highlight the importance of criminal territorial control, and my argument applies to situations in which a criminal group maintains order over voters, regardless of their criminal industry. The importance of governance provision, by way of territorial control, explains why we observe criminal groups succeeding as brokers in diverse contexts.

In the developing world, where millions of people live under criminal rule (13 million in Latin America alone, per Uribe et al. (2025)), my overall results shed light on the implications of criminal governance for electoral politics and fighting crime. While the dominant approach to fighting crime overwhelmingly focuses on policing, there are reasons to be skeptical that policing alone will effectively fight crime, given that the allocation of law enforcement and preferences for law enforcement policies are responsive to electoral politics (Flom and Post 2016; Holland 2013; Laterzo 2024; Novaes 2024), and that there are layers of symbiotic relationships between state actors and organized crime (Acemoglu et al. 2013; Barnes 2017; Flom 2022; Trejo and Ley 2020). How can the government be expected to fight crime if individual policymakers – often those who write the rules – benefit electorally from criminal connections?

This paper provides a theory that helps understand politicians' electoral motives for partnering with criminal groups. In doing so, it encourages skepticism about crime-fighting strategies that only focus on law enforcement instead of the broader governance challenges associated with criminal rule. These conclusions inform our understanding of elections and democracy in contexts where criminal groups govern. When criminal groups wield such control over voters, it is not surprising that politicians will be eager to capitalize on this influence at the ballot box.

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Supporting Information

Table of Contents

A Description of Independent Variables

A.1 Main Variables: Criminal Gatekeeping and Criminal Corralling

I calculate count and binary variables for 1) organized crime, 2) general electoral activity, 3) gatekeeping, and 4) corralling, at the favela-election-year level for the 2008, 2012, 2016, and 2020 Rio de Janeiro municipal elections. Using the 2016 favela shapefile, published by the Rio de Janeiro municipality and managed by the municipal organization *Instituto Pereira Passos*, I classify *denúncias* as inside a favela if they fall within a narrow 100 meter buffer of its perimeter. Then, using text data from 42,889 *Disque Denúncia* calls that

Table A1: Topic Key Words

Topic	Keywords	Keywords (pt)
Organized crime	*Amigos dos Amigos*[1], Command, *Comando Vermelho*, *CV*, Drugs, Faction, War, *Milicia*, Rival, Traffic-, *TCP*, *Terceiro Comando*	AMIGOS DOS AMIGOS, COMANDO, COMANDO VERMELHO, CRIME ORGANIZADO, CV, DROGA, FACCAO, GUERRA, MILICIA, RIVAL, TRAFIC, TCP, TERCEIRO COMANDO
Election (general)	(To) Canvass, City council, Campaign, Candidat-, Elect-, Voter, Pamphlet, Politic-, Advertisement, Ballot box, City councillor, Vote	BOCA DE URNA, CAMPANHA, CANDIDAT, ELEIC, ELEITOR, PANFLETO, POLITIC, PROPAGANDA, URNA, VEREADOR, VOTO
Gatekeeping[2]	Access, Authoriz-, Enter, Expel-, Permiss-, Permit-, Prohib-	ACESSO, AUTORIZA, ENTRA, EXPULS, PERMISS, PERMIT, PROIB,
Corralling	(To) Canvass, Vote buying, Pamphlet, Advertisement, Ballot box, Vote	BOCA DE URNA, COMPRA DE VOTO, PANFLETO, PROPAGANDA, URNA, VOTO

[1] Italicized names on this list are directly translated, as they are the full names or abbreviations of criminal organizations.

[2] The *denúncia*-level *Gatekeeping* indicator is constructed by measuring the joint presence of the gatekeeping keywords *and* the "Election (general)" keywords. For example, if a *denúncia* contains the words "candidate" and "authorize", it is coded as a "1" if it just contains "authorize" but no other election-related words, it is coded as a "0."

occurred inside favelas during the campaign,[30] I measure if each individual complaint call (*denúncia*) contains words that pertain to each topic, shown in Table A1. Then, I construct three additional *denúncia*-level indicators: 1) general criminal electoral activity, 2) criminal gatekeeping, and 3) criminal corralling, which take on a value of 1 only if organized crime keywords are mentioned in the same complaint as election, gatekeeping, or corralling keywords, respectively.

To construct the variables used for the main analyses and reported in Table 1, I aggregate the *denúncia* topics by favela-election-year and generate 1) binary indicators of their presence and 2) count variables of their extent. Figures A1 and A2 print a random sample

30. I define the campaign period as beginning on July 1 and ending one week after the first-round election date, for approximately 90 days. This includes the formal 45-day campaign period, 45 days prior (when campaigning is not legal but is widespread) and the days after the election.

of the translated *denúncias* that contained both organized crime words *and* gatekeeping or corralling words, respectively.

A.2 Alternative Independent Variables: Structural Topic Model

To cross-validate the measures of criminal gatekeeping and corralling that rely on the key words shown in Table A1, I fit a structural topic model on the campaign season *Disque Denúncia* calls (Roberts et al. 2015). I use Mimno and Lee's (2014) algorithmic approach to specify the number of topics, rather than relying on an arbitrary researcher-defined number. One topic (hereafter, "Topic: Elections") was clearly about elections, as shown by the most common words in Figure A3. Approximately 1.5% of the corpus of *denúncias* belongs to this topic during this time period, which makes sense, given that people usually call *Disque Denúncia* to complain about disturbances, low-level crime, or events unrelated to politics.

I then create a few variables to measure the prevalence of "Topic: Elections" in favelas for each year. Using the `stm` R package and the notation shown in Roberts et al. (2015), I calculate for each *denúncia* i and topic j the $\theta_{i,j}$ coefficient (the proportion of "Topic j: Elections") in *denúncia* i). I aggregate the $\theta_{i,j}$ data across *denúncias* to calculate three variables at the favela-election-year level, used as alternate independent variables and reported in Table F4:

- **STM_binary:** An indicator variable if any *denúncias* per favela-year have "Topic: Elections" as their most prevalent topic. Mathematically, if any $\theta_{i,Elections} = \max_j \theta_{i,j}$
- **STM_count:** A count variable of the number of *denúncias* per favela-year that have "Topic: "Elections" as their most prevalent topic. This is expressed as $\sum_i \mathbb{1}(\theta_{i,Elections} = \max_j \theta_{i,j})$ for each favela-year.
- **STM_10:** A count variable of the number of *denúncias* per favela-year that are at least a 10% match to "Topic: Elections." This is expressed as: $\sum_i \mathbb{1}(\theta_{i,Elections} \geq 0.1)$ for each favela-year.

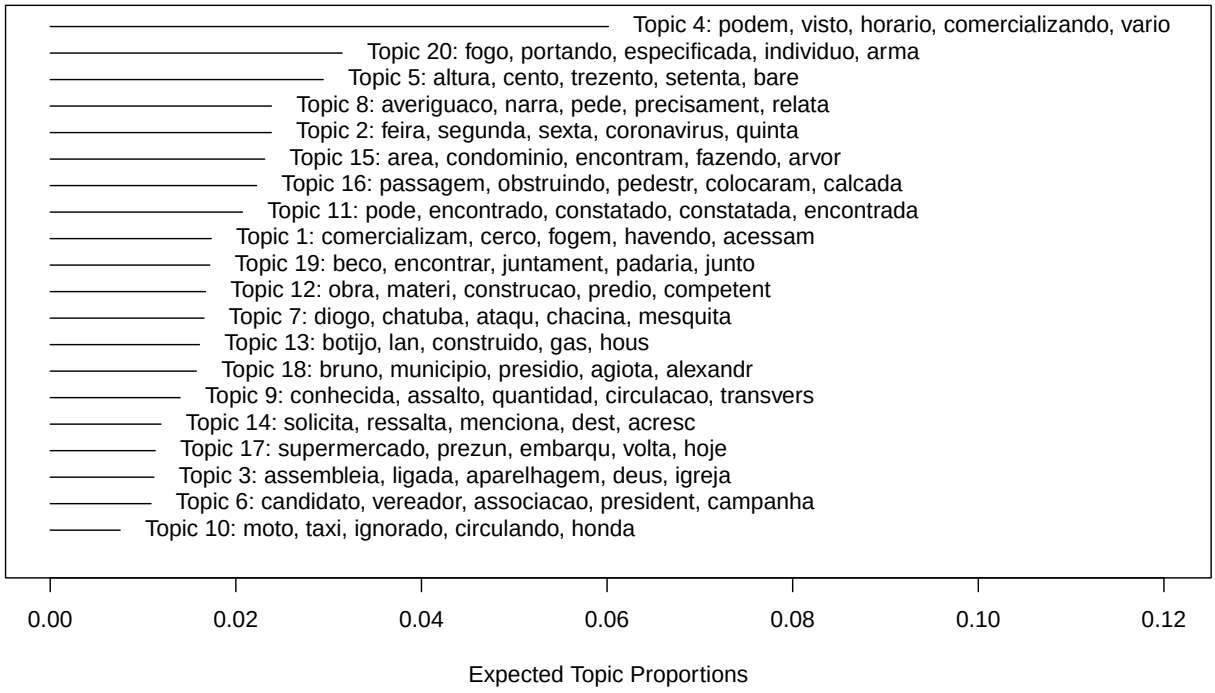
Figure A1: Criminal Gatekeeping *Denúncias*

Original Text	Translation
Em todo morro citado, constantemente, desde inicio das campanhas eleitorais, traficantes (nao identificados) sao vistos retirando placas entre outras formas de propagandas eleitorais de outros candidatos que nao sejam os de sua preferencia ordem foi passada por [redacted] (nao caracterizada), irma os traficantes [redacted], que ja encontram-se preso qual apoia candidato vereador conhecido como [redacted] permite que apenas ele divulgue sua candidatura na comunidade.	Throughout the mentioned favela, since the start of the electoral campaigns, drug traffickers (unidentified) have been seen removing signs and other forms of campaign propaganda from candidates who are not their preferred choices. The order was given by [redacted] (not further described), sister of the trafficker [redacted] who is already in prison and supports the city council candidate known as [redacted] Only [redacted] is allowed to promote his candidacy in the community.
No endereco citado, na associacao [redacted], pode ser visto presidente [redacted] que era nomeada da prefeitura cedeu um terreno no qual funcionava [redacted] para [redacted] esposa do traficante vulgo [redacted], para fazer sua casa. [redacted] deu um quiosque na [redacted], uma barraca de praia. Na associacao trabalha [redacted] filha do traficante [redacted] (nao identificadas). Ha sobrinhos irmao de [redacted] que chefe da obra na comunidade. [redacted] sobrinha de [redacted], proibiram candidatos de realizam campanha no morro [redacted].	At the mentioned location, in the residents' association of [redacted], the president, [redacted] who was appointed by the city government, handed over a plot of land—previously used as the [redacted] center—to [redacted] wife of the drug trafficker known as [redacted] to build her house. [redacted] also gave her a kiosk at [redacted]. Within the association, [redacted] daughter of the trafficker [redacted] and her unidentified sisters work. There are also nephews and the brother of [redacted] who is the construction chief in the community. [redacted] niece of [redacted] has prohibited any candidates from campaigning in [redacted].
No endereco mencionado, proximo estacao de trem de [redacted], acesso pela rua [redacted], localiza-se uma casa de dois andares, onde reside [redacted], vulgo [redacted], um dos assessores do candidato [redacted] tem envolvimento com os traficantes [redacted], este ultimo oriundo da [redacted] juntos decidiram proibir entrada de outros candidatos em [redacted], permitindo apenas que [redacted] faca campanha eleitoral. Os moradores da regiao estao sendo coagidos votarem nesse candidato. Em troca, [redacted] pagou um valor de 30.000,00 ao trafico de drogas, para fazer sua campanha.	At the mentioned address, near [redacted] train station, with access via [redacted] Street, there is a two-story house where [redacted] known as [redacted] lives. He is an advisor of city council candidate [redacted] is involved with drug traffickers [redacted] and [redacted] the latter being originally from [redacted]. Together, they decided to prohibit the entry of any other candidates into [redacted], allowing only [redacted] to campaign there. The region's residents are being coerced into voting for this candidate. In exchange, [redacted] paid R$30,000 to the drug trade to fund his campaign.
Na rua citada, esquina com a rua [redacted], no morro [redacted], na comunidade [redacted], situa-se um barraco, utilizado como esconderijo do traficante [redacted], onde será realizada uma reunião na quinta-feira [redacted], por volta das 20h, com chefes do tráfico de várias comunidades e os líderes comunitários da [redacted] e [redacted], junto a vários candidatos a vereador na região [redacted]. Eles estão exigindo que os candidatos paguem taxas no valor de r$ 10.000,00 (dez mil reais), para que possam fazer campanhas na [redacted] e nas favelas vizinhas. Nesta quarta-feira [redacted], traficantes, armados, proibiram qualquer tipo de campanha na localidade mencionada. Obs.: citados, não descritos ou não identificados.	On the aforementioned street, at the corner with [redacted] Street, on [redacted], in the [redacted] community, there is a shack used as a hideout by the trafficker [redacted] where a meeting will be held on Thursday [redacted] around 8:00 p.m. with drug-trafficking chiefs from several communities and the community leaders of [redacted], [redacted] and [redacted] together with several candidates for city council in [redacted]. They are demanding that the candidates pay fees of R$10,000.00 (ten thousand reais) in order to campaign in [redacted] and the neighboring favelas. On Wednesday [redacted], armed traffickers prohibited any kind of campaigning in the aforementioned area. Note: persons named but not otherwise described or identified.

Figure A2: Criminal Corralling *Denúncias*

Original Text	Translation
Informa que, na favela citada, em frente curva do ha um ciep (centro integrado de ensino publico), onde hoje [redacted] partir das 00h havera um baile funk, patrocinado pelo vereador [redacted], que foi eleito, nas eleicoes do ano 2008, para agradecer apoio dos traficantes em sua candidatura. Afirma que ele foi eleito por meio de compra de votos com apoio do trafico de drogas. Traficantes estarao no local. Pede averiguacao.	In the mentioned favela, in front of the curve where there is a *CIEP* (*Centro Integrado de Ensino Público* - Integrated Public Education Center), today [redacted] starting at midnight, a *baile funk* (funk party) will be held, sponsored by city councilman [redacted] who was elected in the 2008 elections. The event is meant to thank drug traffickers for supporting his candidacy. The source claims that he was elected through vote-buying with the support of drug traffickers. Traffickers will be present at the event. *Requests investigation.*
Na rua citada na rua [redacted], acessos comunidade da [redacted], candidato vereador do partido [redacted], [redacted] esta utilizando funcionarios (nao identificados) da administracao regional, para construirem diversos quebra-molas nestas ruas pedido dos trafico local com intuito de obter votos dos moradores locais citado, era quem comandava regiao administrativa.	On the mentioned street, [redacted], which provides access to the [redacted] community, a city council candidate from the [redacted] party, [redacted], is using employees (unidentified) from the regional administration to build multiple speed bumps on these streets at the request of local drug traffickers. The aim is to gain votes from local residents. The source states that [redacted] as the one who previously controlled the regional administration.
No endereco citado, proximo [redacted], situa-se bar (nao denominado), onde encontram-se dois individuos (nao identificados), armados, levando crer serem milicianos, distribuindo panfletos aos eleitores.	At the mentioned address, near [redacted], there is a bar (unnamed) where two individuals (unidentified), armed and believed to be militia members, are distributing campaign pamphlets to voters.
Na rua citada, proximo ao [redacted] bpm, localiza-se um sacolao, onde podem ser vistos, aos finais de semana partir de 13h, os milicianos [redacted] de vulgo [redacted] policial militar [redacted] que fica apaisano com um fuzil dentro de uma capa de violao, ameacando os moradores pedindo voto para [redacted] de nº [redacted].	On the mentioned street, near the [redacted] (*Military Police Battalion*), there is a produce market, where, on weekends from 1 p.m. onwards, militia members [redacted], known as [redacted] and [redacted] a military police officer, can be seen. Officer [redacted] is in plain clothes, carrying a rifle inside a guitar case, intimidating residents and demanding votes for candidate [redacted] campaign number [redacted]

Figure A3: STM Top Topics



Note: "Topic 6" is the Elections topic. From left to right, the highest-ranking words in this topic are *candidate, city councillor, association, president,* and *campaign*. The Mimno and Lee (2014) algorithm fit a total of 55 topics to the *Disque Denúncia* corpus. This figure only shows the 20 most prevalent topics for readability.

B Description of Vote Choice Outcome Variables

I construct two variables to measure the vote choice outcomes. For both, I begin by identifying the candidate that won the most votes for each ballot-box-year, using the data from the Supreme Electoral Court (TSE). Then, I generate a binary variable ("Vote choice") that takes on a value of 1 if that particular candidate appeared in either of the two lists of alleged criminally-affiliated candidates.

- **Vote choice (*Milícia*)**: The first variable uses the *CPI das Milícias* document as the basis for the list of criminally-affiliated candidates. I collect all city council candidate names mentioned in the document, including those who ran in future election-years (the investigation occurred in 2008). The names, and the election-years, are printed in Table B1. This extends the work done by Hidalgo and Lessing (2019), who focus on candidates named in the report who were successfully elected to the assembly. Not included in this list are pre-candidates for city council who dropped out of the race before election day, such as "Jerônimo Guimarães Filho."

- **Vote choice (all)**: The second variable uses the *Disque Denúncia* data as the basis for the list of criminally-affiliated candidates. I filter all *denúncias* for the stem words "CANDIDAT-," and "VEREADOR-" (candidate and city councillor, respectively), extract, and hand-code the names of all councillors to generate this list. Once I standardized the written names with the full legal names from the TSE data, I applied a coding rule that candidates had to be complained about in *Disque Denúncia* two or more times in order to be included in the final candidate list. A qualitative reading of these complaints suggested that candidates only complained about once were complained about for more benign reasons (loud music, annoying advertisements) compared to the candidates complained about systematically, which were more likely to be for reasons related to organized crime.

For both candidate name lists (*Milícia* and *all*), I generate the outcome variables reported in Table 1 by using the full legal name as a crosswalk to link the name lists to the TSE electoral returns. If a candidate on either list was the most voted candidate for a ballot-box-year, the Vote Choice variable takes on a value of 1, if not, 0.

C Description of Control Variables

All *favela*-level variables, including criminal governance, control for the most-represented *favela* at the voting booth. If there are residents from multiple *favelas* that vote at the same booth (and there often are), the *favela* controlled for is the one with the highest share of voters at the booth.

Table B1: City Council Candidates Mentioned in the *CPI das Milícias*

Name	**Election Years**
CARMEN GLORIA GUINANCIO GUIMARÃES (TEIXEIRA)*	2008, 2012
JOSINALDO FRANCISCO DA CRUZ	2008
ELTON JORGE HAUAT	2008, 2012, 2016
LUIZ ANDRE FERREIRA DA SILVA	2008
CRISTIANO GIRÃO MATIAS	2008
LUIZ MONTEIRO DA SILVA	2008
JOSÉ FERNANDO MORAES ALVES	2008, 2012
ALEXANDRE BATISTA CERRUTI	2008
SILVIA REGINA PINTO PONTES	2008
MARCELO HENRIQUES BAPTISTA	2008, 2012, 2016, 2020
FRANCISCO FELIX VALENTE	2008
WLADIMIR GONÇALVES MAMEDE	2008
JAIR BARBOSA TAVARES	2008, 2016, 2020
JURANI FERREIRA DA ROSA	2008
MARCIO AMARAL DE CASTILHO	2008
JORGE MAURO DOS SANTOS SILVA	2008, 2012, 2016, 2020
MARCELO ZATURANSKY NOGUEIRA ITAGIBA	2012
JOÃO FRANCISCO INÁCIO BRAZÃO	2008, 2012, 2016

*This candidate used different legal names depending on the election year.

C.1 Criminal Governance Controls

As with the main independent variables, I use the corpus of *denúncias* to build a panel database at the favela-month level from 2008-2020. I create four indicators and assign each *denúncia* a value of 1 if it contains the words for the topics shown in Table C1. I then aggregate *denúncias* at the favela-month level and code a favela's monthly criminal governance using the following process:

1. If only one faction is identified as present in a favela for the entire time series (2008 - 2020), I code the favela as governed by that faction for the months when a faction is named. These favelas comprise 41% (445) of all 1,075 favelas.

2. For all other favelas, I hand-code the monthly governing faction, generating individual favela timeseries files with *denúncia* texts to efficiently hand-code large quantities of information. When multiple faction names are present in the same favela per month, I resolve this in one of three ways:

   (a) **Only one faction**: There is only one governing faction, despite multiple being mentioned. For example, a rival faction may be mentioned in a *denúncia* if the local governing faction is preparing to threaten them or engage in another way.

Table C1: Criminal Governance Topic Key Words

Group	Keywords	Keywords (pt)
CV	C.V., CV Faction, Red Command, CV Criminal	C.V., FACÇÃO CV, COMANDO VERMELHO, CRIMINOSA CV, CRIMINOSO CV
ADA	A.D.A., ADA Faction, Friends of Friends,* ADA Criminal	A.D.A., FACÇÃO ADA, AMIGOS DOS AMIGOS, AMIGO DOS AMIGOS, CRIMINOSA ADA, CRIMINOSO ADA
TCP	TCP,* Third Pure Command,* TCP Criminal	TCP, T.C.P., TERCEIRO COMANDO PURO, TERCEIRO COMANDO, CRIMINOSA TCP, CRIMINOSO TCP
Milícia	Milícia,* Milicia-	MILICIA, MILÍCIA

*Indicates that alternate spellings of the same term and common spelling errors are included as keywords. Diacritics are removed so that both spellings with and without accent marks will be tagged to a faction.

When this is the case, I edit the favela-month so only the governing faction's indicator shows their presence.

(b) **Multiple factions**: Though uncommon, factions have been documented cooperating and co-governing certain communities. One of the most common alliances is the TCP faction and *milícias*, especially in later years of the time series. For these favela-months, I edit the code so that both governing factions' indicators show their presence.

(c) **Criminal conflict:** I code favela-months as not pertaining to any faction and in a "Criminal conflict" state when the *denúncias* report large-scale conflict between at least two factions in the favela. The *denúncias* often make explicit a faction's goal to take over or retake a favela, and demonstrate widespread violence and terror.

3. Then, I impute the monthly favela-level data over time. Though *Disque Denúncia* complaints are common, monthly-level data is high-frequency enough that often months go by in a favela where there are no complaints about a criminal group, but this does not mean the criminal group has left. I impute the criminally governing faction up to 24 months (2 years) into the future and 12 months in the past. When there are infrequent complaints about a sole faction in a favela, I impute up to five years of missingness in between observations.

4. I then cross-validate my data in two ways. First, I recruited three graduate student research assistants that are familiar with the context and are native Portuguese speakers. I gave them a random sample of favelas and asked them to code the entire time series, resolving all multiple mentions in one of the three above ways. Their favela-month code was a match to mine 92% (lower bound) to 100% of the time.

Second, I compare my code to the 2019 cross-section from *Fogo Cruzado*, available here: https://erickgn.github.io/mapafc/. *Fogo Cruzado*, a civic-tech organization, also uses the *Disque Denúncia* data to map criminal governance in Rio de Janeiro, but unlike me, approaches the problem of territorial boundaries inductively rather than deductively. *Fogo Cruzado* defines criminally governed territory depending on the concentration of *denúncias* rather than the administrative favela boundaries, meaning that there are a different number of criminally-governed polygons in their dataset than in mine. On average, when comparing my data from 2015 - 2020 to their 2019 annual cross-section, my data is a 68% match. When dropping the polygons that are either a) not present in the municipal registry or b) not present in *Fogo Cruzado*'s database, the average increases to 78%, with a maximum monthly match of 84%. Most of the remaining unmatched cells are favelas where multiple factions were mentioned that I resolved but *Fogo Cruzado* labeled as "In Dispute."

5. I construct four indicator variables (**CV, ADA, TCP, Milícia**) for the faction(s) present in each favela-election-year-month: October 2008, 2012, 2016, and 2020. I also construct an indicator variable if the favela is in a state of **Criminal conflict** during this period. All of these indicators are used as controls for the main models, shown in Table 2. Finally, using the time series data, I calculate an indicator that takes a value of 1 if a favela experienced a change in criminal governance or a criminal conflict in the last 6 months, which I use in Section 5.1.

C.2 *Favela*-level Variables

1. **Distance to Favela**: This is the logged distance (in meters) from the voting booth to the boundary of the most-represented *favela* at the booth. The *favela* boundaries come from the 2016 favela shapefile published by the municipality,[31] and the polling station addresses from TRE-RJ. Polling stations are geocoded and distances calculated by the author.

2. **Population**: This is the logged population of the most-represented *favela* at the voting booth, produced by SABREN and available on the Rio de Janeiro municipality's open data portal.

3. **Income per capita**: This is the income per capita per favela from the 2010 Census, calculated directly by linking the favela shapefile to the the data from the CensoBR and geoBR data packages. I used the census tract-level data, aggregated to the favela level, to calculate average income per capita for each favela polygon.

C.3 Voting-booth-level Variables

All voting-booth-level variables control for population dynamics inside the voting booth that might be correlated with *favela* residency. The historical process that generates the

31. Available to download here: https://www.data.rio/datasets/PCRJ::limite-favelas-2016

exogenous imbalance in voting booth composition is shaped by the different population dynamics in the *favelas* compared to the asphalt. For instance, sudden population growth in a *favela* may lead to the creation of a new voting booth with a high proportion of *favela* residents. This ratio of *favela* to asphalt voters in the booth may persist over time, even as new asphalt and *favela* voters are being assigned to vote in that particular booth.

The *TSE* (Supreme Electoral Tribunal) publishes voting-booth-level statistics about the gender, age, education, and civil status of voters. I control for these time-variant demographic variables at the voting-booth-year-level in the main models:

1. **Age**: The *TSE* publishes the number of voters per ballot box of age 16, 17, and in binned categories for ages 18 and up. For all categories, I take the mean value, then calculate the weighted mean age for the entire ballot box.

2. **Education**: The *TSE* publishes the number of voters per education category, ranging from "illiterate" to "college complete." I calculate the mean education level per voting booth per year. The mean value for the main empirical strategy is an education level between 4 and 5, "primary school complete," and "high school started but incomplete," respectively.

3. **Percent women**: The *TSE* publishes the percent of voters per booth who identify as male and female. A negligible amount do not disclose or identify with the two above genders. I calculate the share of voters per ballot-box-year who identify as female.

4. **Percent married**: The *TSE* publishes the percent of voters in several civil status categories: married, divorced, single, widowed, and legally separated. Fewer than 5% of the sample is divorced, widowed, or legally separated; the vast majority is either single or married. I calculate and report the percent of voters per ballot-box-year who are married.

Figure C1 presents these four demographic variables at the voting booth level, as the exogenous variable, *ShareFavela*, increases. It shows that *favela* residents are slightly younger, slightly less likely to be married, and have slightly less education.

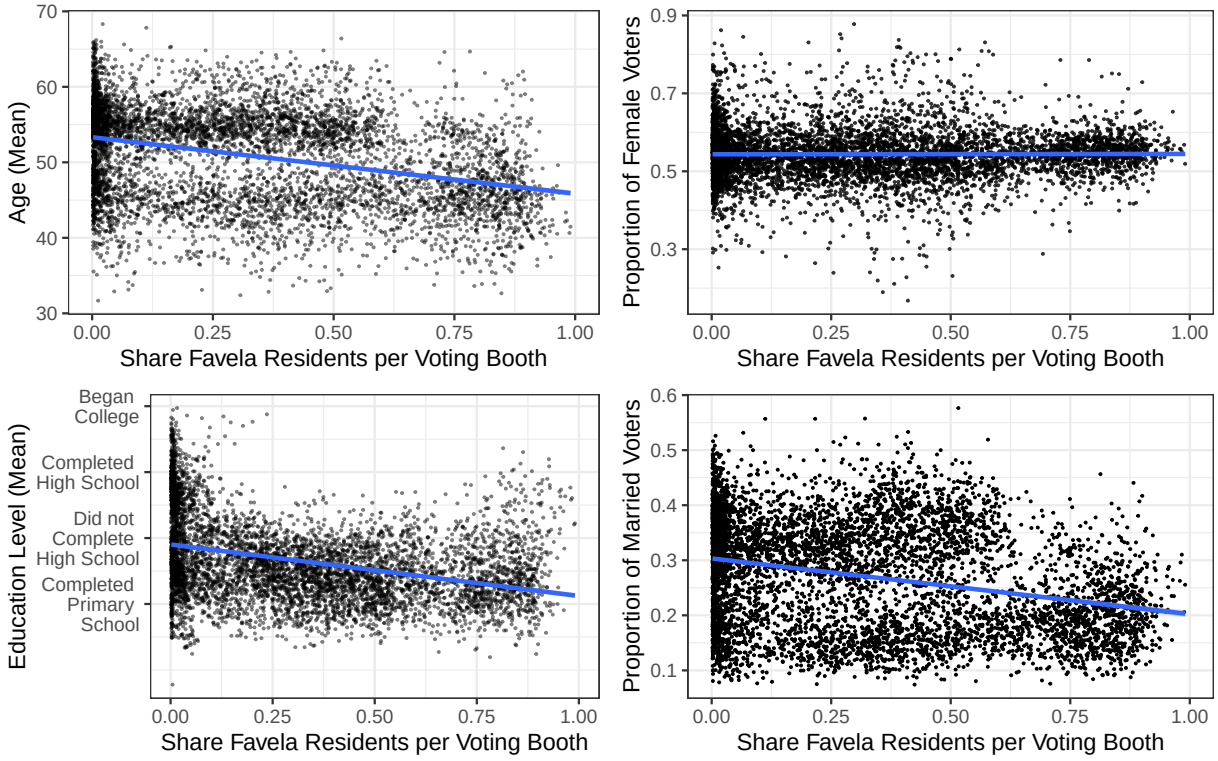
D Electoral Assignment

This section describes the exogenous voting booth assignment procedure. As summarized in Section 4.2 of the main text, voters first choose their polling place within their electoral zone.[32] Polling places contain multiple booths, which contain approximately 300-500 voters.

Once voters choose a polling station (a primary school, etc.), the assignment process proceeds in the following way. Each year when new voters register, their information enters a federal system which assigns the voter to a booth *within their selected polling station*.

32. In cities, electoral zones encompass thousands of people across several neighborhoods. They are territory-based.

Figure C1: Demographic Characteristics of Voting Booths, by the Share of *Favela* Residents



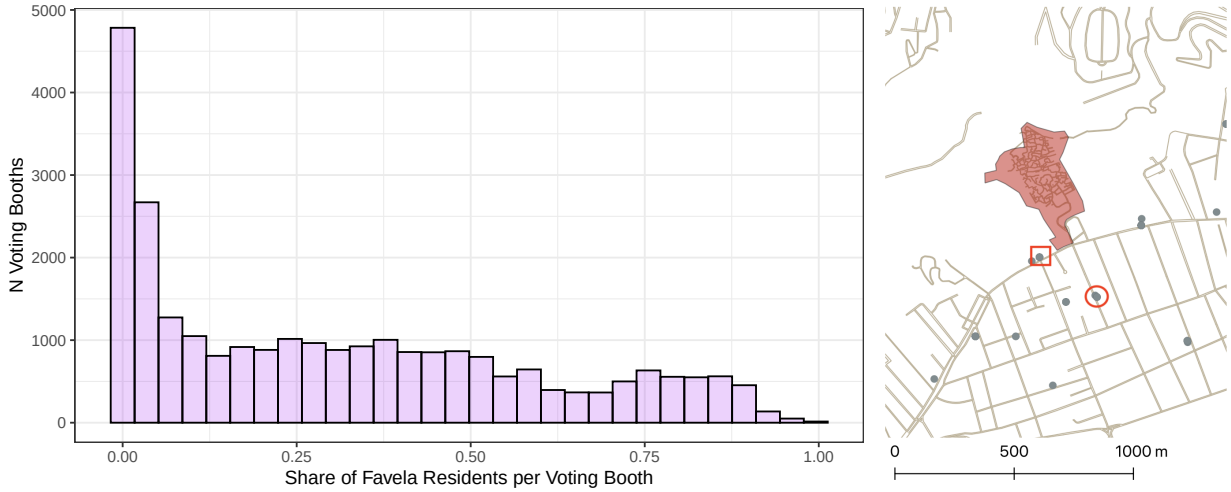
Voting booth assignment stays constant year-to-year unless the voter changes their address or is removed from the list. The software prioritizes balance across voting booths, aiming for voting booths within the polling station to have an equal number of voters. When existing voting booths are approaching capacity, new ones are created. One common consequence of this process is that teenage new voters vote at different booths than their parents, despite living under the same roof.

I leverage this as-if random assignment to voting booths to calculate the share of *favela* residents that vote in each booth. I geocoded all postal codes within Rio de Janeiro.[33] Then, I filed an information request with the ombudsman's office of the Regional Electoral Tribunal of Rio de Janeiro (TRE-RJ) for data indicating the proportion of voters per voting booth that lived in postal codes located inside *favelas*.

All analyses in this paper focus on voting booths where *favela* residents vote. Figure D1 shows the distribution of the share of *favela* voters per booth. The mean voting booth in the sample has 30% of *favela* residents. The average range in $share_{max} - share_{min}$ within any one polling station is 10%, but there are many extreme examples. For instance, in the *Colégio Nacional* polling station, *favela* residents comprise 11% of voters in one booth, 55% in another, and a few classrooms down the hall, 84% of the voters at a different booth.

33. Brazil uses nine-digits postal codes, which are often as small as a city block in urban areas. Each *favela* contains many postal codes.

Figure D1: Share of Favela Residents, per Voting Booth and near *Santa Marta* Favela



Note: Street map and *Santa Marta favela* boundaries from IPP data. Polling station locations from TRE-RJ. The circled polling station is *Escola México*, where a majority of *Santa Marta* residents vote. The polling station with a square drawn around it is *Escola Alemão,* the closest polling station to *Santa Marta* but where few *favela* residents vote.

The *ShareFavela* variable is important because it introduces exogenous variation, but also because it reduces measurement error in understanding how favela residents vote. Common polling station locations are schools or other government buildings that comply with accessibility and capacity codes. Often, such building only are located outside of favelas, or if inside a favela, are not large enough to accommodate all *favela* residents. Favela residents often vote in one of several close polling station to the *favela* boundary, where non-*favela* "asphalt" residents vote. Empirically, this is problematic for measuring how *favela* residents vote because one does not know which polling stations they travel to in order to cast a ballot or how integrated *favela* residents are with other voters.

Figure D1 illustrates this problem in the case of the *Santa Marta favela*. There is no polling station inside *Santa Marta*, but there are several nearby. There is no public information about which polling station(s) *Santa Marta* residents are more likely to vote at versus which their asphalt neighbors, which is why all previous research attempting to map *favelas* onto voting outcomes have followed the same method: create an indicator variable for whether or not a polling station falls within a *favela* buffer zone, ranging from 250 to 1,000 meters outside the perimeter of the *favela* (Hidalgo and Lessing 2019; Nascimento 2017). In the example shown in Figure D1, all polling stations would take on a value of "1" for being within a 1,000 meter buffer zone of a *favela*.

My data reveals that there are some voting booths in this 1,000-meter range that only contain 6% or fewer *favela* voters. The primary school *Escola México*, the polling place where a majority of *Santa Marta* residents vote, is circled on the map in Figure D1. But between the seven ballot boxes inside *Escola México*, one is nearly exclusively *Santa Marta*

residents (75% *favela* voters) while one is a mix of *Santa Marta* residents and the nearby middle class (32% *favela* residents). In the polling station closest to *Santa Marta* with a square drawn around it, *Escola Alemão*, *Santa Marta favela* residents make up a maximum of 6% of voters in each of the 14 voting booths.

E Aggregate Favela Vote Estimates

I analyze marginal candidate returns in the 2016 Rio de Janeiro City Council election as a test case, focusing on those who received between 16,500 and 6,000 votes. I estimate the number of favela votes a candidate receives in the following way:

1. **Lower bound:** I multiply *ShareFavela* by the total votes that a candidate received per booth. This assumes that *favela* and non-*favela* voters are uniformly likely to cast their ballot for any candidate, and is likely undercounting the votes that leading candidates win in voting booths with middling to high shares of *favela* residents.

2. **Upper bound:** I assume that all of a candidate's votes are from *favela* residents if a) they receive fewer votes than total *favela* residents at the voting booth and b) the share of votes they receive closely approximates *ShareFavela* (within 0.05 percentage points). For example, in a voting booth with 90 *favela* residents where the most-voted candidate receives 70 votes, I assume that the candidate's votes are coming from *favela* residents. This is an upper bound because it is likely attributing certain candidates' asphalt votes to *favela* votes.

3. **Mean:** I calculate the mean of the two above measures.

F Additional Tables and Figures

Additional tables and figures are shown below. Certain control coefficients are omitted for brevity, and their inclusion is indicated with a (✓). A full list of control and coefficient point estimates is available upon request. Throughout Appendix F, I use the following abbreviations: GK = *Gatekeeping*, CGK = *Criminal Gatekeeping*, Cor. = Corralling, CC = *Criminal Corralling*, Elec. = *General Election Activity*, CE = *Criminal Election Activity*, SF = *SF*.

Table F1: Main Models without Control Variables

	H1: Gatekeeping		**H2: Corralling**			
	N Candidates		Vote share (*Milícia*)		Vote share (all)	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
γ_{CGK}	-1.022^{*}	-0.268^{*}				
	(0.468)	(0.112)				
CGK	-4.911^{**}	-1.255^{***}				
	(1.510)	(0.364)				
γ_{CC}			0.067^{**}	0.016^{**}	0.042+	0.022^{**}
			(0.021)	(0.006)	(0.021)	(0.007)
CC			0.198^{**}	0.036^{*}	0.406^{***}	0.118^{***}
			(0.069)	(0.017)	(0.079)	(0.017)
SF	-1.642^{***}	-1.631^{***}	0.001	0.001	0.000	-0.001
	(0.361)	(0.360)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.009)	(0.009)
Num.Obs.	29 156	29 156	29 156	29 156	29 156	29 156
R^2	0.554	0.555	0.516	0.515	0.490	0.488
	H3: Electoral Competition (DV: HHI)					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
γ_{CGK}	0.012^{**}	0.012^{**}			0.062^{***}	0.004
	(0.004)	(0.004)			(0.012)	(0.002)
CGK	0.053^{***}	0.053^{***}			0.212^{***}	0.006
	(0.013)	(0.013)			(0.043)	(0.007)
γ_{CC}			0.094^{***}	0.052^{***}	0.072^{***}	0.046^{***}
			(0.020)	(0.012)	(0.020)	(0.013)
CC			0.498^{***}	0.225^{***}	0.435^{***}	0.218^{***}
			(0.074)	(0.033)	(0.074)	(0.036)
SF	0.030^{***}	0.030^{***}	0.032^{***}	0.031^{***}	0.029^{***}	0.031^{***}
	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)
Num.Obs.	29 156	29 156	29 156	29 156	29 156	29 156
R^2	0.674	0.674	0.677	0.688	0.679	0.689
Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Station FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Demographic						
Favela						
Crim. Gov.						

Note: Dependent variable (HHI) and *SF* variables are logged. The unit of analysis is the voting-booth-year. Models include only polling station and yearly fixed effects. Standard errors are clustered at the polling station level: 1,378 clusters. See Appendix F for abbreviations.
$+p < 0.1$,$^{*}p < 0.05$, $^{**}p < 0.01$, $^{***}p < 0.001$.

Table F2: General Election Activity as an Independent Variable

	N Candidates		Vote choice (*Milícia*)		Vote choice (all)		HHI	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
γ_{Elec}	−0.537+	−0.171***	−0.015*	0.003***	−0.019	0.001	0.025**	0.008***
	(0.322)	(0.038)	(0.007)	(0.001)	(0.011)	(0.001)	(0.009)	(0.002)
Elec	−1.734	−0.814***	−0.035	0.010**	0.056	0.020***	0.091**	0.036***
	(1.113)	(0.125)	(0.024)	(0.003)	(0.045)	(0.004)	(0.034)	(0.006)
SF	−1.989***	−1.955***	0.003	0.001	−0.002	−0.004	0.015*	0.014*
	(0.322)	(0.321)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.006)	(0.006)
N	28 991	28 991	28 991	28 991	28 991	28 991	28 991	28 991
R^2	0.573	0.576	0.516	0.517	0.487	0.492	0.678	0.690
IV	Binary	Count	Binary	Count	Binary	Count	Binary	Count

Note: Dependent variable (HHI) and *SF* variables are logged. The unit of analysis is the voting-booth-year. Models include polling station and yearly fixed effects and demographic, favela, and criminal governance controls. Standard errors are clustered at the polling station level: 1,378 clusters. See Appendix F for abbreviations. $+p < 0.1$,$^{*}p < 0.05$, $^{**}p < 0.01$, $^{***}p < 0.001$.

Table F3: General Gatekeeping/Corralling Activity as an Independent Variable

	H1: Gatekeeping	**H2: Corralling: Vote choice**		**H3: Competition**		
	N Candidates	*Milícia*	*All candidates*	*HHI*		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
γ_{GK}	−0.532			0.038***		0.030**
	(0.426)			(0.011)		(0.011)
GK	−3.324*			0.182***		0.125***
	(1.317)			(0.037)		(0.036)
γ_{COR}		0.035*	0.034+		0.063***	0.052**
		(0.016)	(0.018)		(0.017)	(0.018)
COR		0.104+	0.318***		0.342***	0.297***
		(0.060)	(0.078)		(0.069)	(0.069)
SF	−1.993***	0.002	−0.003	0.015*	0.017**	0.015*
	(0.322)	(0.006)	(0.008)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)
Num.Obs.	28 991	28 991	28 991	28 991	28 991	28 991
R^2	0.573	0.517	0.491	0.680	0.683	0.684

Note: Dependent variable (HHI) and *SF* variables are logged. Dependent variables listed as column headers. The unit of analysis is the voting-booth-year. Standard errors are clustered at the polling station level: 1,378 clusters. $+p < 0.1$,$^{*}p < 0.05$, $^{**}p < 0.01$, $^{***}p < 0.001$.

Figure F1: Dependent Variable Distributions

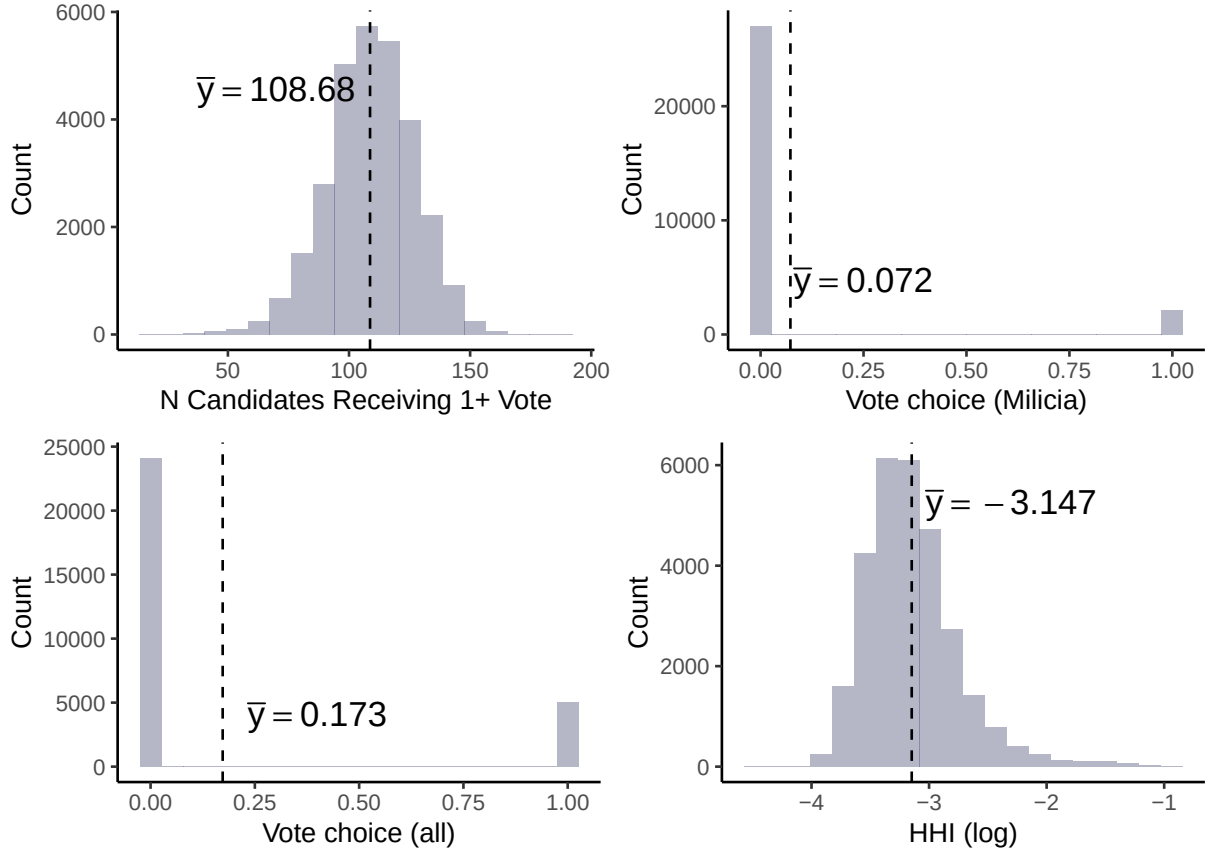


Table F4: Structural Topic Model Indicators as Independent Variables

	N Candidates			Vote choice (*Milícia*)			Vote choice (all)			HHI		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
γ_{STM_binary}	−0.114			−0.016**			−0.014			0.005		
	(0.353)			(0.006)			(0.012)			(0.011)		
STM_binary	−1.206			−0.038*			0.097*			0.024		
	(1.124)			(0.016)			(0.041)			(0.037)		
γ_{STM_count}		−0.577***			0.001			0.005			0.025***	
		(0.105)			(0.002)			(0.004)			(0.005)	
STM_count		−3.029***			0.002			0.068***			0.125***	
		(0.376)			(0.007)			(0.016)			(0.018)	
γ_{STM_10}			−0.419***			0.004+			0.000			0.018***
			(0.078)			(0.002)			(0.003)			(0.003)
STM_10			−2.484***			0.016+			0.044***			0.101***
			(0.259)			(0.008)			(0.010)			(0.010)
SF	−2.302***	−2.227***	−2.201***	0.007	0.005	0.005	0.002	0.000	0.000	0.024***	0.021**	0.020**
	(0.354)	(0.352)	(0.351)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)
Num.Obs.	25 600	25 600	25 600	25 600	25 600	25 600	25 600	25 600	25 600	25 600	25 600	25 600
R^2	0.574	0.578	0.578	0.527	0.527	0.527	0.496	0.498	0.496	0.674	0.689	0.690

Note: Dependent variable (HHI) and *SF* variables are logged. The unit of analysis is the voting-booth-year. Models include polling station and yearly fixed effects and demographic, favela, and criminal governance controls. Standard errors are clustered at the polling station level: 1,378 clusters. See Appendix A.2 for independent variable descriptions and F for abbreviations.
$+p < 0.1$,$^{*}p < 0.05$, $^{**}p < 0.01$, $^{***}p < 0.001$.

Table F5: Main Models with Alternate Dependent Variables

	N Candidates with 5+ Votes		Vote Choice (DD, dropping *CPI das Milícias* candidates)				Most Voted's Share	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
γ_{CGK}	−0.144	−0.047*					0.009***	0.000
	(0.100)	(0.019)					(0.003)	(0.000)
CGK	−0.871*	−0.241***					0.038***	0.000
	(0.361)	(0.061)					(0.009)	(0.001)
γ_{CC}			−0.026	0.005	0.067	0.037***	0.014***	0.012***
			(0.027)	(0.011)	(0.042)	(0.007)	(0.004)	(0.003)
CC			0.210*	0.083**	0.505**	0.185***	0.077***	0.044***
			(0.090)	(0.028)	(0.166)	(0.020)	(0.014)	(0.007)
SF	−0.295**	−0.292**	−0.005	−0.005	−0.001	−0.002	0.001	0.001
	(0.098)	(0.098)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Num.Obs.	28 991	28 991	28 991	28 991	13 352	13 352	28 991	28 991
R^2	0.537	0.538	0.424	0.426	0.560	0.583	0.656	0.666
Sample	Full	Full	Full	Full	Traffickers	Traffickers	Full	Full

Note: Dependent variables are (1)-(2) = *N Candidates with 5+ Votes*, (3)-(6) = *Vote choice for candidates mentioned in Disque Denúncia but* ***not*** *mentioned in the CPI das Milícias*, (7)-(8) = *Most Voted's Share. SF* is logged and the sample is restricted to Trafficker-dominated only favelas for columns (5) and (6). The unit of analysis is the voting-booth-year. Models include polling station and yearly fixed effects and demographic, favela, and criminal governance controls. Standard errors are clustered at the polling station level: 1,378 clusters. See Appendix F for abbreviations. $+p < 0.1$,$^{*}p < 0.05$, $^{**}p < 0.01$, $^{***}p < 0.001$.

Table F6: Criminal Gatekeeping and Criminal Corraling on Voting, Conflict Favelas

	H1: Gatekeeping		**H2: Corralling**			
	N Candidates		Vote share (*Milícia*)		Vote share (all)	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
γ_{CGK}	−16.895*	−5.632*				
	(6.973)	(2.324)				
CGK	−67.428*	−22.476*				
	(26.482)	(8.828)				
γ_{CC}			0.085	0.085	0.125	0.125
			(0.189)	(0.189)	(0.093)	(0.093)
CC			0.422	0.422	0.631	0.631
			(0.944)	(0.944)	(0.470)	(0.470)
SF	0.561	0.561	0.000	0.000	−0.020	−0.020
	(2.001)	(2.001)	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.020)	(0.020)
Num.Obs.	963	963	963	963	963	963
R^2	0.630	0.630	0.480	0.480	0.911	0.911
	H3: Electoral Competition (DV: HHI)					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
γ_{CGK}	0.255	0.085			0.255	0.085
	(0.169)	(0.056)			(0.169)	(0.056)
CGK	−0.023	−0.008			−0.429	−0.348
	(0.633)	(0.211)			(68 491.832)	(54 171.303)
γ_{CC}			0.255	0.255		
			(0.169)	(0.169)		
CC			0.538	0.538	−0.331	−0.833
			(0.857)	(0.857)	(55 799.264)	(132 397.578)
SF	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005
	(0.022)	(0.022)	(0.022)	(0.022)	(0.022)	(0.022)
Num.Obs.	963	963	963	963	963	963
R^2	0.856	0.856	0.856	0.856	0.856	0.856

Note: Dependent variable (HHI) and *SF* variables are logged. The unit of analysis is the voting-booth-year. Models include polling station and yearly fixed effects, and demographic and favela controls. Criminal gatekeeping and corralling are nearly collinear, given the sample size, so models with both interaction terms (Panel B, Models 5-6) drop the second interaction. Standard errors are clustered at the polling station level. See Appendix F for abbreviations.
$+p < 0.1$,$^{*}p < 0.05$, $^{**}p < 0.01$, $^{***}p < 0.001$.

Table F7: Main Models Conditioning on Distance: $\leq$ 500m of Favela Perimeter

	H1: Gatekeeping	**H2: Corralling: Vote choice**		**H3: Competition**		
	N Candidates	*Milícia*	*All candidates*	*HHI*		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
γ_{CGK}	−1.841			0.044		0.065
	(2.363)			(0.067)		(0.056)
CGK	−6.760+			0.287**		0.273**
	(3.775)			(0.102)		(0.088)
γ_{CC}		0.221***	−0.078		0.034	0.040
		(0.050)	(0.074)		(0.065)	(0.064)
CC		0.425***	0.246		0.414**	0.390**
		(0.107)	(0.156)		(0.139)	(0.140)
SF	−4.181***	−0.010	−0.002	0.044**	0.049**	0.044**
	(0.896)	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.016)	(0.017)	(0.017)
Num.Obs.	9379	9379	9379	9379	9379	9379
R^2	0.565	0.526	0.531	0.661	0.667	0.671

Note: Dependent variable (HHI) is logged. The unit of analysis is the voting-booth-year. Models include polling station and yearly fixed effects, and demographic, favela, and faction controls. Standard errors are clustered at the polling station level. See Appendix F for abbreviations.
$+p < 0.1$,$^{*}p < 0.05$, $^{**}p < 0.01$, $^{***}p < 0.001$.

G Research Ethics

I confirm that the human subjects research pursued complies with the *Principles and Guidance for Human Subjects Research*. The human subjects evidence presented in this paper includes the semi-structured interviews with candidates, staffers, community leaders, and favela residents. The research was approved and designated exempt by the relevant review board at [AUTHOR'S UNIVERSITY].

Interviews. All interviews were conducted in person by the author in Brazilian Portuguese. Verbal consent was sought and obtained before the interview began, and there was no deception involved. To further protect confidentiality, interviews were not tape-recorded, the author just took written notes. All identities are anonymized, and translated text is lightly edited for clarity. Respondents were informed of this and were reminded that they did not have to answer all questions. List of cited interviews:

- Interview 1: NGO leader, August 2018.
- Interview 2: Candidate 1, December 2019.
- Interview 3: Candidate 2, February 2021.
- Interview 4: Staffer 1, August 2018.
- Interview 5: Candidate 3, November 2018.
- Interview 6: Public Security Professional, October 2023.
- Interview 7: Campaign manager 1, September 2018.

Voter complaints. An additional data source used in this project is drawn from the *Disque Denúncia* anonymous complaints. While the *Disque Denúncia* data is used to create variables used for quantitative analysis, I also include the text of select complaints as qualitative evidence of the gatekeeping and corralling concepts. This qualitative data source is not human subjects data, as all complaints are anonymous and there is no personally identifying information that could link the complainant to a specific person. Despite this, the complaints contain sensitive information and should be treated with care. All complaints contain the name of rule-breaking candidates and neighborhoods where the offense was committed. To protect residents of these communities from retaliation at the group-level, I have removed all candidate- and neighborhood-level details from the complaints, as well as any other potentially identifying data. Complaints printed in the paper's text contain the translated text with *ALL-CAPS* placeholders for generic candidate or location names. Further, I remove all other potentially identifying details from the complaints and only report the month and year of the tip. List of cited complaints:

- Complaint 1: October 2020.
- Complaint 2: November 2020.
- Complaint 3: November 2020.
- Complaint 4: October 2012.
- Complaint 5: October 2016.