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### Enacting the state through security assemblages

*Materiality, technology and political subjectification in Nairobi*

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## Chapter 5

# Thugs, Inside Jobs and al-Shabaab as Other-Than- Citizens

I was on patrol with James and two other private security officers, the same team who had to negotiate with Kimani, the drunk policeman described in Chapter 3. As on that night, we were in Greenwoods, the wealthy Nairobi neighborhood full of diplomatic residences. It was a chilly, drizzly evening in July, and we kept warm by staying huddled in the car, with the windows only slightly open.

James was usually alert and dutiful, but that evening when I turned to look at him, I saw that he had reclined his seat and dozed off. It was difficult to stay awake on those dark and quiet nights. In the back seat, Tom kept to himself and was trying to stay awake by chewing miraa.<sup>1</sup> We were parked on the main and busiest road in our area of operations. With a fence behind us, we faced the road, ready to drive off in case of an emergency call. But the radio was silent.

Around midnight I was debating whether I should wake James and ask him to drop me off at the shopping mall where I could retrieve my car and go home. But I didn't feel comfortable disturbing his sleep; I could wait a little and hopefully he would wake up on his own. I was looking at my smartphone when something drew my attention. Out of the corner of my eye, I noticed a young man walking in front of us. I kept watching him, turning my head as he continued on his way down the hill towards Bonde, a large

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<sup>1</sup> Miraa, also known as Khat, is a plant native to the Horn of Africa. It has stimulant properties and is often chewed to keep awake by night workers in Nairobi.

low-income urban settlement. I found myself thinking: “Is he a thug? ... At this time of the night ... he could be a thug.”

I had been warned time and again that thugs are always around the corner; that anybody can be a thug; and that they are always ready “to get you.” As the instructor of the HEAT training that I attended in April 2015 had said, there are only two types of people in Nairobi: “victims and victims in the making.” Such alarmist narratives were omnipresent, and “thugs” – alongside two other figures gracing Nairobi’s criminal life, “al-Shabaab” and “the inside job”<sup>2</sup> – represented widespread, deeply entrenched fears among the city’s middle-class residents. “Al-Shabaab” is the Somali-based organization that claimed responsibility for the Westgate attack. “The inside job” refers to the possibility of domestic workers (or commercial employees) facilitating or carrying out robberies in their own workplace. A heterogeneous composition of narratives, imaginaries, media reports, hearsay, crime episodes, and especially policing practices around these figures mobilizes some of the most common visual and material markers through which specific groups of people are collectively *othered* and criminalized.

While my interlocutors often claimed that anybody could be a thug, or a member of al-Shabaab, only specific categories of people are acted upon, and often killed, due to such suspicions. Amidst the deafening indifference of the majority of the city’s residents, the dead bodies are of African men who usually live in poor urban settlements or in Somali enclaves. Similarly, while residents are never sure if and when their employees will turn on them, once a residence is robbed, the first suspects are always the domestic workers, security guards, or nannies, who are collectively criminalized and indiscriminately fired. This often happens outside of legal channels, as the police and courts are not trusted.

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2 Different interlocutors talked to me about “inside jobs” in different ways. Some referred not only to the criminal act, but also to the perpetrators of the act themselves. In the context of my research I adopted such an inclusive definition – an employee who carries out a robbery in her or his work place both *commits* and *is* an inside job.

I was aware of these criminalizing practices and tried not to give into them. But that July evening – in imagining that a young African man could be a thug simply because he was walking at night towards a disenfranchised part of town – I had bought into one of Nairobi’s most contagious imaginaries. While realizing this made me uncomfortable and ashamed, it highlighted the pervasiveness of these narratives. In this chapter I ask: *How do material markers become markers of danger and contribute to the categorization of specific groups of people as criminal?*

These works of categorization are specific processes of political subjectification, or subject-making (Ong, 1996), or – as Hacking would put it – these are processes of “making up people” (2002). Following Isin’s understanding of citizenship as alterity (2002), I approach these categorizations as ways of “being political.” I thus highlight the coordinated work of a diffuse socio-material assemblages of people and material markers as they produce imaginaries of dangerous people. My analysis will show how specific markers shared by large groups of people are mobilized to identify danger, specifically the three dangerous types of “the inside job,” “al-Shabaab” and “the thug.” These three types, and the people thus identified, are enacted as *other-than-citizens* whose belonging in particular public or private spaces is differentiated and contested.

While I engage “the inside job,” “the thug” and “al-Shabaab” as devices to talk about political subjectification, I also understand these processes as contributing to state enactments. I focus on how the markers usually associated with these three dangerous types emerge and persist in the identification of danger and through policing and security practices. I examine how ethno-racial, class, gender and space markers are mobilized in the identification of these dangerous subjects within an assemblage of residents, police, private security guards and their trainers, as well as the technological artifacts used against them (see Chapter 4). It is in security practices specifically aimed at the identification of these types, I argue, that these markers perform a specific kind of political work, which often involves discrimination.

I approach the emergence of these markers through the analytical lens of the endless tension between certainty and uncertainty – over who is dangerous and who is not, and about how to identify dangerous types. In the next section I further articulate my points of theoretical departure. The three sections that follow present the three dangerous types: “the inside job,” “al-Shabaab” and “the thug.” While other imaginaries of danger certainly exist, I focus on the three that were foremost in the minds of my interlocutors. My encounters with these dangerous types were never personal and direct; my direct experience was of the efforts and strategies of residents, security guards, police, and other interlocutors to recognize, identify, deter, and fight them. At the end of the chapter I conclude by highlighting the parallels and divergences between the three types.

### Social Imaginaries of Urban Danger

In this chapter I am interested in how discriminatory markers emerge in the identification of dangerous types. While deemed hard to identify, those labeled as either the inside job, al-Shabaab, and the thug often share respectively similar characteristics based on ethno-racial, class, and gender markers; they are also often associated with specific spaces in the city. It is these characteristics that become markers of danger. Through interactions between these material markers and people, imaginaries, policing strategies, laws, and various objects, people who in some ways fit some of these markers become collectively criminalized and enacted as criminal *others*.

Isin (2002) identifies three types of subjects other than the *citizens*. *Strangers*, often seen as evil, perverse or abnormal, are insiders who act as outsiders. *Outsiders* are subtly but significantly different from strangers, neither belonging to nor interacting with the citizenry. *Aliens* are further excluded and are “entirely outside the realm of sociation and association” (Isin, 2002: 30). The inside job, al-Shabaab and the thug are closest to strangers since they are necessarily part of the city, and in terms of formal citizenship, most are Kenyan citizens. Yet their difference and otherness are qualified in criminal terms. They become that *alterity* necessary to dialogically constitute citizens. Pointing to a citizen necessarily implies the contrary; that is, it delin-

eates people who are, as I call it in this chapter, someone *other-than-citizen*.

I approach the three dangerous types as social imaginaries of danger. By “social imaginary,” I refer to the “way ordinary people ‘imagine’ their social surroundings [...] it is carried in images, stories and legends. [...] What is interesting in the social imaginary is that it is shared by large groups of people” (Taylor, 2002: 106). The imaginaries of the inside job, al-Shabaab and the thug are powerful precisely because they have some basis in the numerous episodes of crime and violence in Nairobi’s neighborhoods, Kenya and the former colonial empire. In fact, Taylor’s approach to the “social imaginary” does not separate ideas or acts of imagination from the institutions, objects and people that are being imagined. The imaginaries of these dangerous types rest on the existence of people who could eventually fit their more or less uncertain descriptions. In this sense, for Taylor a social imaginary is “what enables, through making sense of, the practices of a society” (2002: 91). The social imaginaries of danger I explore here not only enable and inform policing and security practices in Nairobi. As I show in this chapter, these policing and security practices, in turn, reproduce and shape such imaginaries.

Most middle- and upper-class residents of Nairobi fear that those who work for them in their own homes – the people they allow into their private spaces – are precisely those who will rob them, or collude with those who will, by selling or giving away valuable information. Other fears center on the semi-mythical urban figures of the thug and the terrorist member of al-Shabaab. While the social imaginary of al-Shabaab terrorists privileges their Somali origins and Muslim backgrounds, the thug is generally imagined as a person from a poor urban settlement, roaming neighborhoods to prey on innocent victims. While being poor, young, Muslim, or living in poor urban settlements are the markers that slip into conversations, these markers are seldom openly acknowledged. Yet they are often mobilized – especially in policing practices – to identify specific individuals as an inside job, a thug, or al-Shabaab.

Although the practices aimed at identifying the three dangerous types have

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their differences, they share some common traits. The markers mobilized towards the identification of the dangerous types point to skin color, ethnic background, class, gender, religion, and space, and they all speak languages of discrimination that find fertile ground in feelings of the unknown and the unexpected. These markers of dangers are mobilized beyond the African continent; from South Africa and the United States to the Netherlands and Italy (cf. Chevalier, 1973; de Koning, 2015; Diphooorn, 2015a; Farruggia & Ricotta, 2011; Jensen, 2008; Merry, 1981), the “dangerous other” is usually pinned down through some or all of these markers.

### *The Uncertain Markers of Certainty*

During my fieldwork, the dangerous types were often represented as elusive and impossible to recognize in advance. Nevertheless, policing practices that enroll a diffuse socio-material assemblage of people, institutions, media reports, and hearsay stories produce criminalized categories of people that shape urban imaginaries of danger in very specific ways. There is a clear tension between the uncertainty over who is dangerous and how to recognize them, and the certainty that such dangerous types are in fact present.

In the midst of these unresolvable tensions, how does the thug, for instance, stand out as one of Nairobi’s dangerous types? How is he (more or less loosely) identified? Specific markers render each of these dangerous types “phenotypic other[s]” who enjoy a sort of “heightened visibility.” Expanding our understanding of what a phenotype is, M’charek et al. “include markers such as hairdo, dress, or beard style” (2014b: 471). Attire, hairstyle, ethnicity, age, place of residence, the language one speaks and the music one listens to often emerge as markers of danger in security and policing practices. While each of them on their own may hardly raise eyebrows, the way they come together in specific episodes contributes to identifying the thug, al-Shabaab or the inside job.

My interlocutors rarely acknowledged that they used such markers to identify (suspected) criminals. On the contrary, the usual answer when I asked

residents or security guards of Nairobi, “Who is a thug?” or “How do you recognize an al-Shabaab member?” was that anybody could be a thug, even me. The “absent presence” of such markers reveals their relevance through their shadowy and slippery use (M’charek et al., 2014a). As these markers are not acknowledged and excluded from explicit description of dangerous types, they are inserted implicitly into conversations, for example while talking of the places where thugs run away, or when security instructors suggest to trainee guards how to distinguish a resident from a thug. Yet it is never certain how these markers identify a criminal since these urban dangerous types are concomitantly “within” and “outside” (Douglas, 2002), known to the residents and at the same time impossible to really know. They are certainly present in the house, or in the nearby streets, or in the city, yet knowing who they are remains uncertain.

The uncertainty over how these markers come together into a dangerous person is in tension, often, with the certainty that the markers are consistently the same. In other words, since some markers are consistently present in discussions about or identifications of dangerous types, there is certainty (although not explicitly acknowledged) about which ones are relevant. However, the ways such markers intersect and help to identify actual dangerous individuals remains vague. Uncertainty, as an empirical and existential condition, and as an analytical tool, has received in-depth attention, especially in works drawing from African urban experience (Cooper & Pratten, 2015a). The concept has often been engaged in relation to “vulnerability, anxiety, hope and possibility” (Cooper & Pratten, 2015b: 1), or in relation to the “precarious conditions that aggravate uncertainty and difficulties in the lives of people” (Haram & Yamba, 2009: 24). Productivity and fruitfulness have been attached to existential uncertainty (cf. Cooper & Pratten, 2015a), albeit too often in relation to contingent poverty that spurs creative practices of survival.

Instead, here I highlight the co-presence of certainty and uncertainty that are always in tension with each other, and how residents of Nairobi mobilize certain and uncertain knowledge simultaneously, in their attempts to identify dangerous people. Whyte (2009) writes of uncertainty in similar terms,



as the lack of absolute knowledge and the inability to predict the outcome of certain events. She notes how terms such as “uncertain,” “insecure” and “contingent” are often used as synonyms. Her suggestion is to think of uncertainty as a state of *mind* and *mindng*: the former a noun in the sense of intellect, will, and intention; the latter as a verb meaning “to care or feel concerned” (Whyte, 2009: 213). If uncertainty is both a state of mind and mindng, then insecurity for Whyte is a social condition that refers to a lack of protection from danger and risk. “Insecurity itself,” she continues, “gives rise to uncertainty, yes. But it is also a state of limited resources for action” (2009: 214). She argues that dealing with uncertainty is primarily about managing risk and gaining some degree of control. The daily risk of becoming a victim of crime in Nairobi is connected to such a state of mind, to the inability to predict when and how this would happen. The state of mindng, of caring and feeling concerned about it, translates into strategies that aim to mitigate such risk and try to make the surrounding more secure, not necessarily more certain. Thus, the tension between certainty and uncertainty is not resolved, but instead remains and informs the categorization of specific collectives of people as criminals.

In her ethnography of crime and segregation in São Paulo, Caldeira sees the “talk of crime” and narratives about crime and criminals as the “symbolic labor to make sense of [...] experiences of violence” (2000: 77). The work of categorization that I analyze in this chapter involves mobilizing material markers, and not only narratives, to make sense of violence, identify potential threats, and make the surrounding more secure. This process results in the criminalization of specific groups of people, which are *enacted* as criminals, not only “talked” as such. This criminal othering of some groups of people unfolds through the extensive dealing of residents, security guards, police, and media with the dangerous types and through the practices that try to make the surrounding world of Nairobi’s residents more secure. These processes do not produce any “clear-cut categorization,” as the criminalization of specific groups of people as inside jobs, thugs, or al-Shabaab terrorists are “nuanced, and ambiguous experiences” throughout, and not only in narratives terms as Caldeira suggests (2000: 54). The consistency with which some of these material markers become relevant in the identification

of dangerous types makes them markers of danger. In turn, the different groups of people that share such markers become criminalized collectively.

### Markers of Danger and Dangerous Types

In this section I show how the three dangerous types in Nairobi are identified in relation to ethno-racial, class, gender, and space markers. While these identification processes are riddled with uncertainty about which markers actually can be used as markers of danger in specific situations, the collective criminalization of the groups of people that share the same markers is consistent.

#### *The Inside Job*

When a robbery happens in a private residence, domestic workers are always the first suspects. As we learned in the previous chapter, the guard is often accused of colluding with the robbers. However, maids, cleaning staff, nannies and gardeners are all equally suspected as well. In a context where suspicion approximates guilt, accusations have repercussions that easily lead to the loss of employment or worse. When the residents involve the police, it can lead to irregular or illegal arrests, with the police holding suspects for days without charging them. It is often a dramatic situation for detainees, who are regularly extorted by police officers to regain their freedom.

During my first weeks in Nairobi, as I mentioned, I participated in a HEAT course given by a prominent local security professional. From the outset, the discussion turned to ways of identifying dangers. Domestic workers were said to be among the most likely people to represent immediate danger, not least because they are the closest to “our” family and home. “The house helps are not [necessarily] criminals, but they talk,” was the verbatim and general warning about domestic workers. The following passage is a transcript of what the trainer suggested to be a good basic strategy to avoid risk. It was almost dictated to us while he was pacing back and forth between the two lines of tables arranged in a classroom-like fashion where I and the

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other attendees were sitting:

Be careful that they [domestic workers] always take pictures of your house, even in good faith ... when they are playing with your kids. My house help is not allowed to come in my house with her phone. She has a phone that I provide in the house and that's the only phone allowed for her in my house. So they think: "the boss knows that I take pictures of the house. That I talk." This is a deterrent already. Be always careful of what you say on the phone because they are always listening. Avoid a strict routine in the house. Be random. Be inconsistent. That's avoidance.

He continued with examples of his daily anti-routines, emphasizing important bits of advice with long pauses. He said that if he were to leave and return to his house at the same time each day, he would likely become an easy target since every worker in the compound would know what to expect. Instead, he would announce to his domestic employees that he was going to work, only to return a few minutes or several hours later, or vice-versa. The general suggestion – one that many people I met complied with – was not to communicate one's plans for the day or week to domestic workers. Even if they were not ill intentioned, they could inadvertently mention at the kiosk down the road that their employer was out for the week, and malicious ears could be listening.

While domestic workers are entrusted to work and at times live in the same house as their employers, like the guards in the previous chapter, they remain distrusted in many ways. Unnecessary information is kept from them or – as one of my interlocutors did – they are denied access to anywhere in the house but the kitchen, unless in the presence of the residents themselves. Besides pointing towards a problematic labor relation, it highlights the contrast between the certainty with which the residents generally consider domestic workers dangerous and the uncertainty of determining under what conditions and when some of them would actually become an inside job and sell or give information to other criminals. The HEAT trainer's way of dealing with his employees shows uncertainty as a tool. His strategy produces and deploys uncertainty to manage and mitigate the risk of his

domestic workers talking and giving away information about his routines. While uncertainty is a condition he is bound to, he also mobilizes it as a defense. Not sharing the daily plans with his employees or being unpredictable with them creates uncertainty, which is thus used as a resource that – for my interlocutor – discourages and deters from ill-intentioned plans.

The way that many residents of the neighborhoods where I conducted my fieldwork described the inside job felt like an incident waiting to happen. Any domestic worker, the gardener, or the nanny who worked for the same family for years was feared as a concrete and possible threat who could turn against the residents at any point. In my fieldwork this problem was dealt with in seemingly opposite ways. As the HEAT trainer advised, domestic workers were kept at a distance, or out of the inner part of the house, a sort of extremely private and safe haven, where they were admitted only under the resident's supervision. An alternative way to deal with them that I encountered was to treat them with a sort of fearful and accommodating attitude, which translated into "treating them well" in order to avoid revenge.

Once I interviewed the security delegate of a gated community in Forestgrounds that housed about 25 families. He was a Asian-Kenyan business owner in his mid-forties. The business, which employed a few dozen people, had never been robbed – which he considered sufficient evidence that he had the right strategy to deter an inside job. While we were strolling in the parking lot of his residential compound, between cars and freshly hung laundry, he said: "If you don't pay your servants properly, yeah, then ... I'm sure ... they can..." After an awkward silence he let me finish his thoughts: "They can get back at you?" He nodded and continued: "You see, all you should have ... humanity. That is more important than anything else. You are eating pizza in front of a person who is working in your home ... I have my maid, right? Since my child was young ... she was taking care of him. If I'm eating pizza, I'll give two pizzas to her ... I'll give her the fresh warm pizza, I'll eat the cold one..."

Above all, my interlocutor presents his attitude towards the house help as informed by issues of fairness and kindness towards his own employees.

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It seems altogether disconnected from the concerns that prompted other residents of Forestgrounds to lock the door separating their kitchen, where the maid would be working, from the rest of the house; or, as my HEAT trainer suggested, to follow unpredictable daily schedules. However, while these strategies seem opposite, they also converge. Keeping a maid and other domestic workers out of the inner part of someone's house, keeping them in the dark about daily plans, giving her the warmest slices of pizza so she will not sell her employer out to thugs – all suggest entrenched distrust. The residents, who are, understandably, trying to protect their families and properties, mobilize different strategies through which their employees are enacted as threatening, sometimes prone to crime, and as someone who needs to be either kept away or, alternatively, kept happy to avoid revenge. But they are rarely trustworthy people.

In both strategies, domestic personnel become threats to residents' security and were described as if they were almost naturally prone to crime or as the (unaware) brokers between robbers and the families they worked for. They seemed unpredictable. They needed to be convinced not to collude with thieves. Domestic workers were also enacted as childlike. They were spoken about just a few meters from where they were preparing tea, and they were pointed at with a movement of the chin as if they were completely absent or unable to understand conversations, as I once witnessed during an interview I conducted in a home in Forestgrounds. The HEAT trainer suggested that – like children – they talk and reveal important information about their employers without even knowing it. Independently of their intentions, they become accessories to crime and hence criminal themselves.

When a domestic worker is accused of being the inside job leading to a robbery, even without evidence, the connection between uncertainty, knowledge and security suggested by Whyte (2009) assumes concrete relevance for the worker. An immediate extra-judicial sentencing of the domestic worker and the certainty of a repercussion (being it a dismissal or worse), strides against the uncertain knowledge about such guilt. On the other hand, the certainty of this repercussion fueled the tendency of security guards and other workers to flee the scene right after a robbery to avoid punishments

and incarceration, independently of their involvement. This trend, in turn, reinforced their sentence of guilt in absentia and the presumption that robberies usually happen because of an inside job.

Consequentially, the certainty with which individuals are identified as inside jobs after a robbery produces the whole collective of domestic workers as likely criminals. Even though residents acknowledge that many workers are not ill-intentioned, formal and informal reports, hearsay stories circulating through neighborhood networks, and locking doors shut to limit access to inner parts of houses consistently enact domestic workers as criminals. Through an assemblage of events, stories, people, objects and practices, suspicion about an individual maid or guard who might have been an inside job afflicts the collective of domestic workers as people likely to be “inside jobs.”

This process seems to reiterate an old association between working classes and danger (cf. Chevalier, 1973). Wealth (or, actually, the lack thereof) often becomes a marker of danger that is associated with domestic employees and other poorly paid workers, and it is often called into conversation to justify and make sense of episodes of theft. In the residential and commercial spaces of Forestgrounds poorer people embody a phenotypical other – as M’charek et al. would put it (2014b). Workers are often more poorly dressed than the residents, and they walk while residents drive or are sometimes driven. It is often assumed that these dangerous others are in Forestgrounds for work or business activities. They are not residents of the neighborhood, which, for them, becomes a space of uncertain belonging at best. The mobilization of class markers towards the identification of the inside job does not just reflect class; it rather reproduces it and shifts its meaning from a mainly economic realm into one of criminality.<sup>3</sup>

At the same time, other markers intersect with those of wealth or class. Do-

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3 Similarly to what Spronk argues for the case of middle-classness (2014), these practices could also be interpreted as signifying cultural practices that constitute class. See note 10 in Chapter 1.

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mestic workers are consistently African, whether they work in African, Indian or White households. In Forestgrounds specifically, a neighborhood with residents predominantly of Indian descent, skin color and ethnicity acquire further visibility. Some female residents of Indian descent wear saris while Kenyan maids and baby sitters usually dress in western or more typically Kenyan clothes. All these markers, though not necessarily explicit, come together in ever-different ways after a robbery happens towards the identification of who was the inside job.

The way in which practices aimed at identifying danger categorize domestic workers as inside jobs brings to mind the figure of the “stranger,” one of the three types that for Isin (2002) dialogically constitute citizens through alterity. Domestic workers, like the strangers, are insiders: they work and sometimes live inside the employers’ home; or they might live within the boundaries of the neighborhood where they work. Yet, like the strangers, they do not fully belong. They are *made* outsiders in the context of the house and neighborhood where they work or live. While they are expected to take care of someone’s house or family, they are simultaneously asked to retreat to the kitchen or within parts of the house that are accessible by alarms with a “maid-code,” or they are excluded from information about the family they are tasked to care for.

The collective criminalization of domestic workers unfolds through the friction created between certainty and uncertainty. The uncertainty over the intentions of a specific employee stride against the certainty that becoming a victim of an inside job might be only a matter of time, since for the HEAT trainer there are only victims and victims in the making. It also strides against the certainty provided by the too many stories of robberies happening because of, for example, a “nanny turned bad.” The criminalization exceeds the individual and yet unfolds by dealing with a specific maid, guard or gardener. Workers and residents, however, are not the only actors of this process. A variety of elements mediate the enactment of domestic workers as people *other-then-citizens*, such as the markers that, in the specific case of the inside job, predominantly assume the characteristics of class and wealth.

### *Al-Shabaab*

Al-Shabaab is probably the most internationally notorious danger in Kenya and Nairobi, possibly because of the Westgate attack in September 2013. While I approach al-Shabaab as a specific urban danger, it obviously crosses urban boundaries. It is a political force in the northeastern and coastal districts of Kenya and forged several international ties to other similar groups in Africa and beyond (Anderson & McKnight, 2015). Notwithstanding this international dimension, I heard and talked about al-Shabaab, and observed anti-terrorist strategies in the urban context of Nairobi and its neighborhoods. The effects on everyday urban life posed by al-Shabaab's terrorist threat is especially visible in how people, for instance, modified their daily social engagements, or even grocery schedule (cf. Glück, 2017). The al-Shabaab attack on the Westgate mall was a stab in the heart for many wealthy residents of Nairobi. Some of my interlocutors told me that they were there that day or could have easily been there (cf. Smith, 2015), and many of them knew one or more of the victims. While Westgate is the episode that stuck in the worldwide imaginary of al-Shabaab, it was not an isolated one. Other similar episodes, though having received less media attention, happened in different parts of Nairobi and other cities, and disrupted specific and local ways of living in Kenyan cities.

One evening I met with a Nairobi friend for a drink. As often happened, we ended up talking about politics and politicians. The latter are surrounded by an aura of discontent and mistrust. My friend said: "How do we know if Uhuru [Kenyatta, the President of the Republic of Kenya] is al-Shabaab? He could be al-Shabaab, but we don't know!" The perception that anybody can be al-Shabaab is reinforced by feature stories in national and international media outlets about, for example, British or German nationals travelling to Somalia to join al-Shabaab.<sup>4</sup> Much more powerful, perhaps, are

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4 See for instance: June 16, 2015, The Telegraph (online), "Thomas Evans: British al-Shabaab fighter's body will not be brought home" at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/terrorism-in-the-uk/11677317/Thomas-Evans-British-al-Shabaab-fighters-body-will-not-be-brought-home.html>; or June 18, 2015, BBC World (online), "Kenya issues reward for German al-Shabab fighter" at <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-33180466>.



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journalistic reports (e.g. West, 2016) and other hearsay stories about Kenyan youth, often highly educated and from different ethnic and religious backgrounds, leaving their families and travelling to the eastern borders of Kenya or to Somalia for the same reason. Arguably anyone could be part of the Somalia-based terrorist group. Thus, how does the identification happen?

Narratives around the dangerous type of al-Shabaab, its identification, and the policing practices deployed to fight it articulate certainties and uncertainties. The certainty relates to al-Shabaab's presence in Nairobi, to the knowledge that they are active in the city, based on the evidence of multiple attacks claimed by the group. However, the individual member of al-Shabaab is elusive. He could even be President Kenyatta and, as we learn from media and popular stories, racial or ethnic markers do not seem to apply. Yet the elusiveness and uncertainty around this dangerous type contrast with the strategies deployed to fight it.

Suspected al-Shabaab members are often killed and the Kenya Defense Force or the police are never questioned for such extrajudicial killings; rather, they are encouraged and applauded. Recently, several reports denounced extrajudicial killings of Muslim men in Nairobi and Kenya. In December 2014, an Al Jazeera investigative team produced a documentary<sup>5</sup> where they interviewed, on camera, officers of the so-called "death squads." Many members of such teams confirmed they had carried out several extra-judicial assassinations of these dangerous types. Among other organizations, Human Rights Watch (2015: 333) in its Country Summary over the 2014 events reports:

Various police units have also been implicated in the torture, disappearance, and unlawful killing of alleged terrorism suspects and individuals of Somali origin, Somali refugees, and Muslims in Mombasa, Nairobi, North Eastern region, and other parts of the country.

[...]

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5 <http://interactive.aljazeera.com/aje/KenyaDeathSquads/>.

## Thugs, Inside Jobs and al-Shabaab as Other-Than-Citizens

Suspects were shot dead in public places, abducted from vehicles and court-rooms, severely beaten during arrest, detained in isolated blocks, and denied contact with their families or access to lawyers. In some cases, members of the anti-riot forces known as the General Service Unit (GSU), military intelligence, and National Intelligence Service (NIS) were also implicated in abuses alongside the ATPU [Anti-Terrorist Police Unit].

The specific logics and markers pertaining to al-Shabaab tend to point towards Muslim Somalis as the collective category where uncertainty around the dangerous type of al-Shabaab becomes more certain. When allegedly unrecognizable and unidentifiable al-Shabaab members are killed and identified as terrorists, their bodies become part of a collective whose shared markers unexceptionally read: Muslim and Somali (or of Somali origin).

Markers of danger explicitly referring to space are relevant for the case of al-Shabaab, as they were for the case of the inside job (and as they will be for the case of the thug). Eastleigh, a predominantly Somali neighborhood, takes the forefront as a spatial marker that is often mobilized in discussions around the urban presence of al-Shabaab. However, “being resident in Eastleigh” cannot be taken to mean “Somali” due to the number of Somali-Kenyans, Ethiopians and other nationals living in the neighborhood. In September 2013, the Kenyan government joined the “war on terror” and in April 2014, during the infamous operation “Usalama Watch,” thousands of people were arrested in Eastleigh and detained in Kasarani Stadium. Media and NGO reports<sup>6</sup> showed how people were targeted based on what is believed to be a Somali-looking phenotype, which articulated physical appearances, religion and place of living. Eastleigh gained attention in the collective imaginary as the Kenyan-based urban nest of al-Shabaab, and it is still considered as such to date.

Eastleigh is not only a space associated with al-Shabaab, but with criminal-

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6 <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2014/05/kenya-somalis-scapegoated-counter-terror-crackdown/>, and <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2015/country-chapters/kenya>.

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ity and danger in general. This was made evident by Simon, a taxi driver whose service I regularly used. Simon was highly opinionated about Nairobi's urban geography. Once when we were making our way to the airport, we got stuck in one of the city's countless traffic jams and he took a diversion. Not surprised by his quick adaptation, I asked him if he was going to drive through Eastleigh. He was surprised by the simple fact that I – a Muzungu – even knew where the neighborhood was. He explained that Eastleigh is a Somali enclave in Nairobi, and it is “too dangerous” to drive there.

By linking an ethnic marker to a space considered dangerous, an entire population had been rendered dangerous and enacted as criminal. In the way Simon put it, it was uncertain which – the space of Eastleigh or the Somali population – is the leading marker of danger. In this context of imminent danger, the two markers are hardly separable. Through the powerful imaginary surrounding al-Shabaab, the entire Somali population is criminalized and marked as dangerous. Likewise, the space of Eastleigh – already historically *othered* for its predominantly Somali population – becomes outright criminal.

In this process some categories of people are made criminals and strangers. The tensions between being an insider and being made an outsider differ here from “the inside job,” as spatial markers weave together with those of nationality and formal citizenship status. The markers “Somali” and “living in Eastleigh” contribute to enacting this population simultaneously as insider to the space of the city and outsider to both the city and the nation, in this case specifically the Kenyan nation. In the city of Nairobi, *othered* spaces emerge as being within and outside the city itself. As I will explore in greater detail below, some markers of danger remain uncertain only until someone is identified as al-Shabaab. Once such identification happens, these markers enter the imaginaries of this dangerous type and reiterate a process of criminalization of the category of people sharing them.

### *The thug*

Thugs are another ubiquitous dangerous type in Nairobi, feared and fought

in every corner of the city. In this section I introduce this figure and show the tensions between how he is talked about, how he is identified, and the strategies residents and security providers deploy against him. As is the case with the other two dangerous types, a group of people – young African men living in poor urban settlements – is collectively criminalized. But this seeming certainty is riddled by the uncertainty of the identification process. Although the ethno-racial, class, gender and space markers for the thug resemble those for the inside job and al-Shabaab, they are used in specifically different ways and emerge through city-wide security practices that enroll police, private security companies, residents and various technological artifacts.

Many residents of Nairobi feel that “thugs” are omnipresent in the city. As a non-native English speaker, I had rarely heard this word used so consistently before arriving in Nairobi. This was especially the case during the patrol nights with different MRTs in the neighborhoods of Forestgrounds, Greenwoods, and Highsprings. Quickly the most interesting issue for me became the way thugs could be recognized. The young man from the vignette that I saw walking in Greenwoods during my night patrol, who was most probably going home after work, became a thug for a few seconds. In that, my reaction suggests that I recognized what Jaffe, in her ethnography on urban pollution and politics in the Caribbean, calls “everyday bodily regime” (2016: 71), those “everyday routines, mundane yet political practices” related to style, bodily care and comportment. I had embodied a spatial ordering (Jaffe & de Koning, 2016) specific to Nairobi upper-middle class geography and had learned how to identify bodies out of place that did not fit “naturally” (Jaffe, 2016: 71).

This episode prompted me to probe the figure of the thug more assiduously. I asked Benson – an MRT member in Forestgrounds – how he recognized a thug and what characteristics in a person would alert him to one. A youth wearing jeans and safari boots is a fair giveaway, he said. I smiled. For a moment I thought he was pulling my leg, but he was serious. I looked at him and then at my own jeans and safari boots. He noticed them and continued: “If... you were Black... or if you were downtown.” This was the second

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instance that I had heard the word “Black” related to racial identification during my fieldwork. To further show how markers of danger come together in varying combinations, the racial identifier was coupled with a dress code and a spatial marker. Being Black counted more than (or as much as) being downtown, an area of Nairobi usually associated with crime.

The first time I went on patrol with James in Greenwoods, I was bombarded by warnings about thugs. James’ team and several other security guards met at their usual spot to change into their uniforms. One of them was particularly vocal. After welcoming me, he made sure that I understood that “thuggery” was Nairobi’s main problem. I asked him how one could identify a thug. He grabbed my arm, shaking it vigorously as if to ensure that he had my undivided attention. With his eyes wide open, he yelled: “Anybody can be a thug! ... Even you!” Could I be the thug type? I felt that something did not quite fit. Later that night while on patrol in Greenwoods, we crossed the highway from a posh neighborhood into one of Nairobi’s poor urban settlements. As this was my first patrol, they took care to introduce the places we were visiting. The poor urban settlement we were driving towards, one of the guards told me, is where all the thugs live and come from.

The uncertainty over the specific thugs’ identity and the certainty that thugs all share specific markers are visible beyond the security guards’ patrols. During a major security fair, one of the largest security companies in Kenya was about to give a demonstration of the efficiency and training of its canine unit. The scene took place outside the main hall. As the two dog handlers approached the middle of the improvised open-air stage, the dogs immediately attacked the two people playing the role of thugs, quickly neutralizing and forcing them to the ground. One was wearing a full-body bite-suit and a motorbike helmet to fully showcase the dogs’ abilities; the other, perhaps to make the scene more realistic, was wearing regular clothes. One leg of his trousers was ripped shorter than the other (before the dog’s intervention); he wore a football jersey commonly found in the city’s lower-income secondhand street markets. The scene communicated, immediately and unmistakably, that the most dangerous person on the scene was this young man, who stood out visually through his dressing style. His outfit and de-

meanor were meant to convey that he was young and poor, and the staged security and canine intervention suggested he was a thug.

In the episodes above, several markers of danger come together somewhat unexpectedly, and at times inconsistently. In the last episode a security company employee impersonated a thug, for marketing purposes, by dressing up like a poor young Nairobiian. In the other instance, Benson suggested that he recognizes potential thugs by their dress code of jeans and safari boots, the latter being common footwear in Nairobi for men who earn a low income. When I pointed out that I was wearing a similar outfit, he suggested that I would not be mistaken for a thug because I was not Black (African) and/or loitering downtown.<sup>7</sup> Here race and space surfaced as meaningful markers because the dress code alone seemed insufficient. Benson's example also assumed that all thugs are in fact Africans. In a city where the great majority of people are African, it could make statistical sense that the majority of thugs share this racial marker. Simultaneously, because of the ubiquity of this specific marker, it enhances the uncertainty of who actually is a thug – to such an extreme that for the guard who shook my arm I could be one. In this case, epitomizing in extreme terms the difficulty of recognizing a thug, the specific racial marker disappeared altogether. With such uncertainty, other markers became relevant, but never by themselves alone. Class, dressing style, gender and space markers are mobilized in practices towards the identification of this dangerous type without excluding the relevance of racial ones. It almost seems as though these markers are more effective at identifying who is likely *not* to be a thug, al-Shabaab, or an inside job.

As Jensen notes in his ethnography of policing in the Cape Flats of Cape Town (2008), spaces assume meanings of danger and crime. Benson also used space to reassure me that, as I was not loitering downtown, I would not be mistaken for a thug. In the explanations of the security guards in Greenwoods, the poor urban settlement adjacent to the wealthy neighborhood is essentialized as a breeding ground for thugs. Conversely, all thugs are essen-

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<sup>7</sup> For a discussion on racial identification in Kenya see note 3, Chapter 1. For an historical contextualization see Chapter 2.

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tialized as poor and living in poor urban settlements. One of my interlocutors who volunteered in a community policing organization often stressed how his team would stop chasing thugs once they entered a “slum,” suggesting a homogeneous criminal space and safe haven for thugs. Through these associations, the space of the poor urban settlement and the dangerous type of the thug is fused into one.

Markers of space, race, class, etc., are not used in isolation. Rather, it is their combination and the ways they are related that enter practices of identification of thug and the other dangerous types. When I participated in the MRT training with twenty security officers of a large private security company, we simulated the tactical response procedures for a break-in and hostage situation. Divided into five teams of four people, each team consecutively played the guards’ team and the rest inside the compound played either the robbers or the residents/clients. One of the teams completely failed to follow procedure and this led to a theatrical simulated death of the homeowner character. One of the team members then went to one of the trainers and complained about his team’s negative evaluation, lamenting that they could not differentiate between the thugs and the clients. The entire team gathered around the trainer, impatiently trying to have their evaluation reversed. Overlapping voices insisted that as everyone was wearing the company’s uniform, differentiating the criminal from victims was impossible. Even though the exercise was geared at concealing the identities of the characters, the trainer dismissively replied to the guard that during a real-life emergency, “you will know who is the client, who is the guard, and who is the thug.” Against the uncertain knowledge of the simulation scenario, about which the guard complained, the trainer responded that, with absolute certainty, in a real emergency they would have been able to tell clients from thugs apart.

Like my own reaction to the young man walking by in the opening vignette, the response of the trainer suggested that the members of the MRT were expected to instinctively recognize a thug, and draw from that shared knowledge of some “everyday bodily regimes” (Jaffe, 2016). The fact that very limited training time was devoted to this crucial task suggests how, in such

contexts, guards will need to draw from some shared knowledge that seems to be tacit and mobilize some markers of danger in the course of their work.

The question, however, remains: how do some specific visual and material markers become markers of danger? What does such reconfiguration entail? The next few episodes that I recall show how some markers become associated with danger *ex post facto*. Through repetitive extrajudicial killings of suspected thugs who consistently share certain class, ethno-racial, gender or spatial object-markers, the latter become markers of danger. This reconfiguration from, for instance, ethno-racial categories to categories of danger enacts entire groups of people as criminals and non-belonging.

In March 2016 a shootout between police and “some” thugs occurred in an area adjacent to Forestgrounds. People narrated the battle live on social media. A few pictures of a dead young man lying in a pool of blood were later shared on the WhatsApp chat group that I was member of, “Crime Alerts.” There, someone asked if the dead body was a thug or a victim. Meanwhile the body count ensued. First four, then six thugs killed. But there was no information about how many carried out the original attack. A vehicle and two guns were recovered, according to some sources, and the police was prized for the “commendable execution of duty.” Similarly, at the end of March 2017, a smartphone video went viral through Kenyan social media showing a plainclothes police officer shooting in the back a surrendering and unarmed young man who laid on the ground. As newspapers and television news programs picked up the video, we learned that, allegedly, the young man was a thug, a member of a renowned gang and apparently not to be considered a victim. The reactions on social media and the comments on online versions of the newspaper articles mostly reflected praise for the police officer, while the victims were frequently referred to as (suspected) criminals.

While the uncertainty about who is a thug is often reinforced by convictions that “anybody can be a thug,” a definitive recognition and an official identification of a thug often takes place in the city morgue. Here the identification of a thug as a specific individual happens *ex post facto*, on the



thug's body, after a "suspected thug" is shot dead either by police or private licensed firearm holders. Once those dead bodies, which prompted an unusual prize for the police, were transported to the city morgue their identification was made complete and permanent. In what reminds of Appadurai's analysis of ethnic violence, these dead bodies "establish the *parameters of otherness* [...] in situations of categorical uncertainty" (Appadurai, 1998: 913, emphasis added). The thug and the inside job alike are identified after they have been either extra-judicially sentenced or killed, not before.<sup>8</sup> It is through this *ex post facto* identification that some markers become relevant and permanent, and markers of danger.

The process of identifying someone as a thug is full of uncertainty because of the slippery use (M'charek et al., 2014a) of the markers of danger that are mobilized. What makes their use even more slippery is the fact that they describe an overwhelmingly large proportion of Nairobi residents, rendering these markers useless. The consequences of this are remarkable. "Suspected"<sup>9</sup> dead thug-bodies that fit the description of young African men living or coming from a poor urban settlement reinforce a criminalization process that enact this category of people as thugs.

In the context where "anybody can be a thug," many people in Forest-grounds (as elsewhere in Nairobi) pointed out to me that thugs now "also

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8 For further discussion on the frequent practice of extra-judicial killings in Nairobi: Kimari, 2015; Price et al., 2016; van Staple, 2016. For media reports: Cyrus Ombati in StandardDigital (Online), April 1, 2017: "Policeman among 9 people killed in Nairobi as video shows officers felling suspects" at <https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/article/2001234704/policeman-among-9-people-killed-in-nairobi-as-video-shows-officers-felling-suspects>, and Mike Pflanz in The Telegraph (Online), July 3, 2014: "Kenya's five times more likely to be shot dead by police than by criminals" at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/kenya/10941227/Kenyans-five-times-more-likely-to-be-shot-dead-by-police-than-by-criminals.html>.

9 Local and national media outlets often report (without particular outrage) the killings of "suspected thugs." This becomes the usual justification for police brutality. For example: August 28, 2015, The Standard, p. 21. "3 suspected thugs killed"; August 19, 2015, The Standard, p. 16: "Five gangsters shot dead in separate incidents"; August 17, 2015, The Standard, p. 16: "Suspects drop gun, as two thugs are killed"; July 8, 2015, The Standard, p. 16: "Police shoot dead four suspected thugs in Kayole."



Figure 4: Newspaper clipping: Police shoot dead four suspected thugs in Kayole. Source: *The Standard* July 8, 2015, p. 16.

wear suits” or that “Indians steal too” which, by way of highlighting exceptions and the uncertainty of some markers, normalizes the fact that poor Africans are those usually associated with theft and criminality. Similarly, in its very first sentences, the newspaper clipping featured in Figure 4 emphasizes that there was one woman among the four suspected thugs. This statement is double-edged. On the one hand, it disrupts a pattern that sees only young poor men being killed as thugs, but on the other it highlights an exception, and in the process normalizes the association of thugs with men. Joseph – an activist in a human rights organization in a poor urban settlement – during an interview in his office vented his frustration about how young boys from this settlement are targeted and often killed by police and how this does not seem to disturb anyone in the city and beyond.<sup>10</sup>

10 During this interview conducted in June 2015, Joseph also took issue with the reports concerning the extrajudicial killings of Muslim and Somali people in Kenya at large. His discomfort was not for their specific contents but for their oversight of police brutality in his own neighborhood. While he was well aware of the differences between those killed as suspected al-Shabaab versus the youth of his own neighborhood, during our conversations he mentioned that one of these reports denounced just twenty extrajudicial killings in over two years in the whole of Kenya. He looked at me after a pause and said that whoever wrote that report must have forgotten his neighborhood because “that’s our monthly count.”

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He suggests that reasons for such brutal killings are their outfit, the music they listen to and many other characteristics that would not be commonly considered criminal elsewhere. This shows how more markers beyond race, class, gender and space contribute to shaping these social imaginaries of danger. Joseph and others warned me that headlines in local and national daily newspapers and other media sources, for example “3 suspected thugs killed”, are very often the usual justification for episodes of police brutality.

Joseph's remarks on musical preference as leading to extrajudicial killings showed that markers are not always or necessarily visual, as Jaffe (2016) also suggests. Other audible markers in Nairobi play a crucial role in criminalizing people. Sheng, for instance, is a language largely spoken by urban (usually poor) Nairobians at the crossroad of Swahili, English and Kikuyu. Many of my interlocutors from different paths of life discredited it as a “language of the thugs,” or a language “used to confuse other people.” This is one more instance of how markers of dangers are not few and certain, but are embedded in uncertainty as they are used to identify danger. While they are complex and many they keep doing a political work of discrimination against specific groups of people.

However, taking seriously the existential feeling of uncertainty that anyone could potentially be a thug helps to understand how the urban dangerous type of the thug comes to be constituted as a specific political subject, and how it is consequential for entire groups of people. Jensen (2008) highlights how the dangerous figure of the Skollie in Cape Town is consistently identified before and after the crime, in narratives about criminality and in policing practices with young Coloured men living in the townships. Differently, in Nairobi, the certainty that the thug is around, close and ready to strike at any moment is contrasted with the sensed and cognitive uncertainty of an unrecognizable thug. Such uncertainty, together with the high level of violence in Nairobi, produces anti-thug strategies, where thugs become bodies that can be acted upon, killed. In this process when “suspected” thugs are shot dead, each individual body becomes part of a collective whose characteristics are almost without exception those of young African men living in poor urban settlements. The suspected criminality of one individual body

taints other living bodies that share the same characteristics, criminalizing them as a collective category of political subjects.

In this process, not only narratives (cf. Caldeira, 2000) but also policing and security practices, markers, dead bodies of “suspected thugs,” and spaces are woven together in an assemblage, simultaneously, enacting young African men living in poor urban settlements as criminals. They are products of political subjectification processes and through enacting them as others, other people are enacted as citizens. Differently than with the inside job, however, the spaces in relation to which they are simultaneously insiders and outsiders are not those of private residencies, but the larger ones of the city and its neighborhoods.

### Conclusion

In this chapter I have discussed how security and policing practices mobilize certain markers towards the identification of dangerous people in Nairobi. Ethno-racial, class, age, gender and space markers are enrolled in narratives and policing practices and they shift meaning into the realm of security, emerging as indicators of danger. In wealthy and not-so-wealthy neighborhoods, break-ins, carjacking and robberies in general are very concrete possibilities that cannot be dismissed or underestimated. After such episodes, nannies, guards or maids are accused of being inside jobs. Young African men from poor urban settlements are repeatedly killed on the street and publicly sentenced as “suspected thugs.” Muslim Somalis from Eastleigh are arrested or killed as al-Shabaab terrorists. Various characteristics shared by these individuals who are arrested, sentenced or killed as one of these dangerous types become collective markers of danger. The groups of people who share such markers are criminalized collectively, pointing to the specific political work these markers afford. It is through such markers that danger is recognized and identified while entire categories of people are discriminated against.

The security practices through which residents, private security officers, and police try to identify dangerous types are discursive and material pro-

cesses of political subjectification. They fall within those “state effects” that Trouillot identifies, which do not “coalesce around the central sites of national governments” (2001: 131). As such, they contribute to enacting the state and, concurrently, specific categories of people as (not) belonging to – for instance – a household, a neighborhood, a city, or the nation. The inside job, al-Shabaab and the thug are specific ways of being political, similarly to what Isin foregrounds about the category of the “strangers” (2002: 30). Although insiders, they are simultaneously enacted as outsiders, “evil, irrational, perverse, abnormal” (Isin, 2002: 31). As a point of contrast to the subjects who do belong – that is, the citizens – the dangerous types are enacted as someone *other-than-citizens*.

Marking specific groups of people as (criminally) strangers necessarily goes beyond the individuals identified as an inside job, a member of al-Shabaab, or a thug. The markers of danger that I detailed in this chapter are crucial towards the identification of these dangerous types as collective categories, as ways of existing in the world (cf. Hacking, 2002) in relation to security concerns. Markers do not do this work on their own, but they are part of socio-material assemblages that enroll different elements. Newspaper and hearsay stories are involved, though narratives or the “talk of crime” (Caldeira, 2000) is only one of the many processes that categorize some people as criminals. Policing practices bring together different actors such as private security companies, residents and various technologies, as I discussed in the previous chapters. Guns are the tools that produce dead bodies that consistently share specific markers. Metal detectors and alarms contribute to differentiating people, allowing some into certain spaces, and not others. Processes of political subjectification are necessarily heterogeneous and relational: it is through the work of the entire assemblage that some categories of people emerge as *other-than-citizens*.

The three dangerous types relate to, and at the same time differ from, each other. The inside job, al-Shabaab and the thug rest at different perceived distances for the residents of Nairobi. For the residents I talked to in the areas where I conducted fieldwork, the probability of becoming a victim of an inside job seems slightly higher than becoming a victim of a thug,

and much higher than becoming a victim of al-Shabaab. Al-Shabaab in this sense appears further away than a thug and even more so than the inside job. In Forestgrounds, for example, my interlocutors seemed to have a tacit understanding of these different probabilities, which was mirrored by the amount of time they spent talking to me about each of the three dangerous types. The conversations I had about al-Shabaab felt vaguer and at times more contradictory than those about the thug. In conversations about the inside job, on the other hand, this type felt like a daily danger that residents knew and dealt with more intimately. Across the three specific cases, some ethno-racial, gender, age and spatial markers translate into the domain of security, shift their meaning, and become markers of danger after suspected criminals have been extra-judicially sentenced or killed.

In this chapter, I showed how different spaces were mobilized as markers of danger. For each of the dangerous types, however, spaces are articulated in different ways. In the case of the inside job, spaces are quite immediate. The danger comes from the proximity of domestic workers, which is not only symbolic but physical too. Their presence in some parts of the house might signal danger, and residents deploy different protective strategies, often involving various types of technologies. With the case of the thug and al-Shabaab, instead, it is different urban spaces that become markers of danger. Eastleigh is often identified with al-Shabaab, as are poor urban settlements with thugs respectively. They are safe havens for the dangerous types, but dangerous places for others. These and others cross cutting themes between these specific types and across the previous chapters will be the focus of the following concluding section.