Pariahs of the Wonderful City:

Crime, Representation, and the Imagined Geography of Citizenship

in Rio de Janeiro, 1977-1982

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> Preventive police action, considered sufficient for preventing robberies, has no way of distinguishing between criminals and citizens. —Editorial criticizing police prejudice in randomly searching bus passengers. (*Jornal do Brasil* 9 May 1982)[1]

[1.] Introduction

Rio de Janeiro has always had an uneasy relationship with its hinterlands. Ever since freed slaves first built *favelas* with improvised materials atop *Morro da Providência* hill overlooking the city in the late nineteenth century, it has never been clear what the relationship between the "Wonderful City," as Rio de Janeiro is affectionately known, and its surrounding slums ought to be. On the one hand, elites and reformers have historically seen the slums as a place of moral degeneracy. Municipal leaders have initiated a variety of "civilizing" projects aimed at "bringing in" this periphery, and these have ranged over the years from vaccination and hygiene programs to *favela* urbanization programs, and more recently, to aggressive security campaigns. On the other hand, it is from the slums that much of Rio de Janeiro's allure originates: *Samba, Carnaval*, soccer players who learned to play in the streets, the *mulata*.[2] In 1980, this metropolis of five million had almost a million of its citizens living in one of the 500 or so *favelas* scattered throughout the urban landscape (Cavallieri). By then, the term "urban hinterland" had become a metaphor for the urban condition of the poor: while *favelas* were described in everyday speech as part of an "urban periphery" or "hinterland" that "surrounded" the city, *favelas* occupied all parts of the city, often rubbing up against wealthy neighborhoods.

The symbolic struggle to define the city-*favela* relationship and its shifting geographical boundaries has always been bound up with fundamental questions of entitlement, power, and exclusion in Rio de Janeiro. In this article, I examine public debates about urban problems during the early years of the transition to democracy in Brazil (1977-1982) to illustrate the ways in which these debates constituted symbolic contestations over

the boundaries of inclusion into civil society. I argue that the influx of migrants, growing fear of crime, and the uncertainties of the political transition put the citizenship of the poor into doubt by questioning their "proper place," their social entitlements, and their civil rights. In Rio de Janeiro, dominant discourses of criminality and poverty constructed a map of the city in a way that posed the impossibility of any eventual integration of slum-dwellers into the city proper, and by extension, of endowing the poor with the rights and entitlements of citizenship in Democratic Brazil.

On the eve of Brazil's full transition to democracy, discussions about "fear of crime" and "urban poverty" in Rio de Janeiro served as sites for the symbolic construction of the non-citizenship of the poor, and helped legitimate their exclusion and violent repression in the new democracy. The symbolic construction of non-citizenship in Rio de Janeiro is evinced by three distinct but interrelated discourses. First, geographical imagery presented the city as besieged. Public debates continually posed the question of the place of the poor, and crime was explained as the result of the poor being "out of place." Instead of a vision of the poor belonging to a specific place in the city, this was a vision of the city invaded by an external threat. Second, criminality was framed in terms of "demographic" as opposed to moral or medical discourses. Demographic explanations for crime differ from moral explanations in that they do not call for individual treatment or surveillance, but rather expulsion, separation, and elimination. Finally, the appearance of a new type of criminal was posited, one whose reform was deemed impossible and thus should not be subject to traditional disciplinary practices. As will be argued below, these discourses do not align with disciplinary discourses calling for the surveillance, individuation, and reform of criminals and the poor (Foucault 1977). Rather, they bear closer resemblances to discourses of "massive divisions" that characterize pre-disciplinary power regimes.

Tracing these discourses and their shift toward a non-disciplinary regime in Rio de Janeiro during Brazil's democratic transition is the object of this essay. In order to do so, I analyze the discourses and signifying practices through which a number of "official" voices have constructed dominant representations of the city and its inhabitants.[3] To study the construction and contestation of citizenship and public problems requires the self-conscious study of official fora. Some of the most cited "discussants" in this public cultural conversation were government and security officials, politicians, police chiefs (*delegados*),

criminologists, and public defenders. For this research, then, I consider citations, stories, editorials, and letters from both major newspapers in Rio de Janeiro (*O Globo, Jornal do Brasil*), available transcriptions from discussions in the legislature, and official reports.[4]

[2.] Citizenship and the Cultural Geography of Fear

Thinkers from Max Weber and Georg Simmel onward have pointed to the historical importance of the urban bases of citizenship claims. City-based mentalities make possible the kind of civility implicit in citizenship, while the anonymity of urban ways of life requires citizenship because of the need for impersonal standards to regulate interactions among strangers. Here I wish to make a case for a study of citizenship that is grounded in contested meanings of urban space. As urban social, political, and economic transformations call forth questions of citizenship, answers to those questions bring about partial resolutions and (re)constructions of citizenship through discussions about the city and its problems. The limits and content of citizenship, what it means, and to whom it applies, are invariably implicated with the discourses and signifying practices through which representations of urban space are constructed. As new meanings emerge about urban space and about what kinds of persons live and are allowed in it, citizenship is bounded and reconstructed. Understanding the discursive shifts in these constructions becomes a crucial component of attempts to recover any liberatory and democratic potential in citizenship itself.

I draw upon insights of both cultural geography and social theory for tools to understand the contested nature of urban space and its implications for citizenship. Social theorists have in recent years reasserted the importance of space for a variety of social processes. Following Lefevbre, de Certeau, Harvey, Soja (1989), and others, it has become commonplace to maintain that space is constituted by and constitutive of social action. Influenced by cultural studies scholarship that examines the importance of contestation over cultural forms and meanings, cultural geography has shown that meanings of space are always subject to ongoing negotiation and contestation. In the late capitalist metropolis, space has become particularly contested in light of the transformations, instabilities, and upheavals associated with uneven flows of capital, information, and people (Harvey; Castells 1996, 1997, 2000).[5] Because of these instabilities, and because meanings and

representations of space are always open to challenge and re-interpretation by transgressive or subversive practices, there is always "symbolic work" that attempts to re-inscribe dominant meanings and representations in the face of these challenges (Cresswell 1996). Urban space is therefore criss-crossed with dominant projects of class, race, gender, and cultural hierarchies (Gregory).

Cultural geographers have examined the linkages between symbolic representations of space and relations of power and dominance within a variety of contexts.[6] Of particular salience here are studies that expose how representations of the city inscribe "geographies of exclusion" (Sibley), and how exclusionary geographies are organized around dominant constructions of place (Cresswell 1996, 1997). Dominant discourses of criminality and deviance are important ways of ordering the social world by defining an "other" against which dominant norms are measured and valorized. Likewise, dominant constructions of a city's spaces as dangerous, deviant, or undesirable have been established as one of the most important ways of culturally mapping the city, both in official or mass media sources and in "every day talk" (Caldeira 2000). Defining city places as dangerous, threatening, dirty, or disorderly constructs persons from those places as threatening, especially when they are deemed to be "out of place" (Cresswell 1996, 1997).

Sociologists and political theorists have also sought to interrogate the geography of citizenship and its place-based meanings (Somers; Brown). Chantal Mouffe, for example, suggests that we understand "citizen" as not only a legal category but also a form of identity resulting from competition among conflicting discourses (Laclau and Mouffe; Mouffe 1992, 1993). These discourses aim to fix the meaning of citizenship, what groups of persons it extends to, and what aspects of the common good ought to extend to them, resulting in structuring what Mouffe calls political spaces—the political "inside" and "outside" implicit in the construction of identities (1993, 69-71). The identity of "citizen" is a construction that is neither ready-made nor necessarily stable, but it is always organized around exclusionary oppositions to its constitutive outside through the "determination of an other" (1992, 2). As discourses "fix" the boundaries of the political community, and between citizens (bearers of rights) and non-citizens, the boundary between the two becomes disputed. As discourses that extend or shorten the reach of citizenship are deployed, new justifications are given and new "others" are constructed; the result is that,

particularly at times of regime changes and realignments, there are intense contestations over ambiguous and unstable "frontier effects" at the boundary of this political space as new configurations of citizenship call forth new outsiders (1992, 134).

As these "frontiers" were called into question in Rio de Janeiro during Brazil's democratic transition, new discourses were summoned to re-stabilize their boundaries. But what was unique to discussions about the city and its problems at this time was that they underwent a shift away from constructing social problems as individual problems and toward other sorts of explanations. While individual failings call for individualized interventions and surveillance—the kind of "panopticist" disciplinary techniques Foucault describes as part of modern regimes of power—demographic explanations that explain crime as a by-product of excess population call forth responses of division, separation, and population control, and pose the impossibility of these "excess persons" enjoying the benefits of citizenship. Instead of descriptions of slums as places of moral degeneracy, descriptions began to emphasize the virus-like growth and multiplication of the poor. Similarly, representations of the city moved away from a gradated, disciplinary vision, in which each class or group has a proper place, to a vision of the city as "invaded." And instead of pointing to the importance of disciplinary reform inside prisons, these discourses focused attention upon and magnified the prevalence of highly dangerous and irreformable criminals.

These discourses do not follow a "disciplinary logic" but rather a "logic of inclusion/exclusion." As Foucault writes, these are opposing logics characterized by the difference between the ideal of Benthamism (disciplinary) and the ideal of the "city besieged by the plague" (non-disciplinary). According to Foucault, "rather than the massive, binary division between one set of people and another, [Benthamism] called for multiple separations, individualizing distributions, an organization in depth of surveillance and control" (1997, 198). While some scholars have pointed to periods of co-existence between disciplinary and non-disciplinary discourses, this has generally been addressed in the context of colonial histories.[7] Little work exists that traces instances of shifts, as I do here, away from disciplinary regimes. The fact that this takes place during Brazil's transition to democracy is particularly significant, as it reveals contradictions in the democratization process itself. Attention to discourses about the city and its places brings

attention to fact that the transition to a formal democracy was part of a process of the re-organization of citizenship that, in significant ways, drew boundaries around the political community that were ultimately more exclusionary, despite the demands of social movements.

[3.] Earlier Disciplinary Discourses

Early efforts to address urban problems in Rio de Janeiro, such as the *Plano Agache* urban plan of 1930, were already dealing with a landscape "polluted" by irregular housing (Stuckenbruck). By the 1950s, public discussions about the slums were describing in oppositional terms the relationship between the hinterlands and the civilizing project taken up by the city.[8] Reformist concerns in the 1950s and 1960s tended toward "moral" and medical explanations for poverty that emphasized individual pathology and prescribed integration, moral regeneration, and education as solutions. Social service efforts in Rio de Janeiro, such as by the catholic charitable organization, *Fundação Leão XII*, intervened into the social life, family life, and education of the poor to prevent them from falling into criminal ways, and they were strongly encouraged by the government until the 1960s (Pino). A typical government report from 1957 describes the *favela* as "an area of disintegration, maladjustment, and disharmony easily set apart by its seemingly chaotic and asymmetrical geometry,"(30) but it also mentions that:

> [the] *favelado* is a hard worker of strong spirit, whose only fault is scepticism. There is no definitive or marked sociological characteristic to be attributed to the slum-dweller. (Goulart 31)

The report goes on to note that the slum-dweller has a noble savagery about him: "women are not as likely to have abortions as some rich ones" (32), the family of the *favelado* is stronger (37), and the *favelados* live in a racial harmony that is not present in many other places (35); though the *favelado* is a victim, "he is not irreligious" (38), and great social progress is promised by the intervention of the church. Similarly, other social reports of the time emphasized paternalistic but reformist solutions to the *favelados*' social ills.

As Schwarcz documents, in the earlier part of the century eugenic theories had gained currency in Brazil as a branch of medicine, partially as a result of the success of

sanitation medicine campaigns against cholera, yellow fever, and small pox. Elites were thus concerned with, among other "social problems" of the urban poor, the fate of the country as a "mongrel" nation. The eugenicist *Liga de Hygiene Mental* was founded in Rio de Janeiro in 1922, and its prescriptions for "improving the race" involved sanitation, exercise, and social services for the urban poor. Similarly, there were paternalistic concerns with the "degenerating" state of the family among urban poor and working classes (Besse). The construction of the citizenship of the poor in Brazil as a whole followed the same paternalistic logic. The urban poor were considered wards of the tutor state and were entitled to limited social benefits in exchange for the performance of "socially useful" labor, a conception some have described as "regulated citizenship" (Santos).

[4.] The "City of 300 Slums" and the Transition to Democracy, 1977-1982

> If we added all of the *favelados* in Rio de Janeiro we would have the third largest city in Brazil. —Marcos Candau, Secretary of Social Development. (*Jornal do Brasil* 13 Jan. 1980)

Viewpoints on urban problems decidedly shifted away from these paternalistic concerns toward non-disciplinary exclusion in Rio de Janeiro and in Brazil in the late 1970s. National and city-based citizenship were particularly contested during this period immediately before full transition to democracy in Brazil. Three factors called the limits of citizenship into question: the rising number of urban migrants and urban poverty, the claims of new social movements, and the visible rise of criminal practices in wealthy areas of cities.

Changes in agriculture had steadily forced millions of migrants to urban centers since the mid-1960s, while land speculation and inflation drove up the cost of rental housing, forcing many working poor into shanty-towns (Singer; Kowarick 1980). These factors pushed the number of *favelados* to almost three-quarters of a million out of the city's total population of five million by 1980 (Cavallieri). With *favela* settlements on the south side of downtown literally exhausting available physical spaces, the "belt of poverty" now continued to extend outward to the industrial northern region of the city. The resulting

landscape juxtaposed the *Rocinha* slum, housing as many as 200,000 persons, next to wealthy neighborhoods. It was also during this period that the "popular pro-democracy movement" began to organize and stage anti-dictatorship acts in many urban areas, including Rio de Janeiro. The military had ruled the country since 1964, and by the late 1970s the dictatorship had begun to show signs that it might consider a transition to democracy, which it undertook in 1984. It was at this time, then, that numerous social movements started to more visibly organize with expectations of the eventual transition. In Rio de Janeiro, activists organized a number of neighborhood associations in poorer areas, as well as an umbrella organization of associations, FAMERJ, in 1979. Neighborhood associations grew from 33 in 1978 to 166 by 1981, making claims around issues of housing, security and public services (Boschi 1987). Progressive elements of the Catholic church became involved in pro-*favela* issues and organized base communities at the time as well. In the country as a whole, popular protest called into question the limits of citizenship by raising issues such as the right to vote, the right to assemble, the right to unions, and the cost of living, in a series of spectacular public acts. The well-known strikes in the São Paulo industrial park in 1978 halted work for several hundred thousand workers, as the cost of living movement drew thousands of people to protest.[9]

A national debate about police efficiency, stricter punishments for criminals, the death penalty, and safety in cities was also on going at the time. Various scholars point to the scandalous headlines that appeared in major newspapers with regular frequency during the period (Benevides; Cerqueira 1991). The *Jornal do Brasil*, one of the country's most important newspapers, inaugurated a "violence" section as well as a regular "violence yesterday" feature on its front cover in 1981. Other newspapers also included stories and editorials about a "wave of insecurity" gripping major urban centers. Scandalous "real crime shows" on television and on the radio focused on life and events in the slums, while journalistic books with titles such as "Rio: City of 300 Favelas" and "The Most Dangerous Place on Earth" hit the newstands (Souza). In 1980, a group of lawyers and social scientists was commissioned to study the causes of urban crime, and the resulting report (Brazil 1980b) marked, for some analysts, the beginning of an "official panic" about crime (Cerqueira 1987).

Criminal practices had in fact increased in the period, and had changed in spatial patterns (Coelho; Adorno 1993). Certain kinds of criminal behaviors started to threaten the security of previously safe wealthy areas, and violent crime increased in the areas where it would be likely to be reported as such. What is important about this change, however, was how it was constructed, and how these constructions justified ever-more violent reactions to crime instead of calling for other types of measures. So while homicides in Rio de Janeiro, for example, roughly doubled betweeen 1977 and 1981 (Coelho), a significant portion of this increase was due to increasingly repressive and violent police tactics, as "death squad" killings and police executions that became more frequent during the period (Americas Watch Committee). The city's major crime syndicate was dubbed the *Comando Vermelho* (The Red Command) by the media in an allusion to communism. In April of 1981, it was the ostensible cause for the largest single police operation ever in Rio de Janeiro, a televised standoff between one of its leaders and four hundred policemen (Lima 1994).

[5.] The Poor out of Place

> Criminality does not stop growing and does not have geographical preferences. —Spokesperson of the Secretariat of Public Security arguing against special "treatment" to certain areas. (*Jornal do Brasil* 12 Mar. 1980)

All of these changes described above—the numbers of poor migrants, the transition to democracy and new social movements, and the changing perceptions of crime—seemed to blur the city-*favela* boundary. Concerns about this growing "other city," as a place of disorder and lawlessness, as a source of crime and vice, and as a source of uncontrolled growth, dominated discussions of the topic in Brazil at the time. The discourses summoned forth to deal with crime and poverty during the period are telling, in that they represented a decided shift from earlier discourses.

Rio de Janeiro in the late 1970s was characterized by its discursive construction as besieged and surrounded on all sides by "belts of poverty" or "belts of insecurity." Against a vision of specific places in the city for the poor, as in Haussman's plan for Paris, this was a vision of the city choked by these belts, with its poor circulating alarmingly freely

throughout it. The movement of the poor into certain areas of the city posed the question of their "proper place," of where the poor ought to live and circulate, and of their place in society at large.

The answer ultimately given, that these persons had no place in the city, implied that they were beyond the boundaries of the benefits of citizenship. Earlier versions of urban planning and reform in Rio de Janeiro entailed *gradated* forms of entitlements, whereas this version only re-inscribed total non-entitlement. Murilo Maldonado, a Brazilian Democratic Movement Party (MDB) state deputy, expressed this discursive shift by summoning some fantastic numbers about the invasion of city streets by hordes of criminals and potential criminals (abandoned minors) against an ill-equipped police force. He inquired, "how can you police well with a badly equipped and badly paid police in a city with more than 150,000 abandoned minors and 30,000 condemned criminals in liberty?" (*O Globo* 6 May 1979).

A typical explanation for crime was that the poor were out of place and in too close proximity to wealth. "Poor people out of place" were bound to feel a sense of frustration by virtue of being near the rich, which can engender crime. Attila de Souza Leão Andrade jr., a Rio de Janeiro lawyer, wrote in an editorial:

> Brazilian Society has transformed itself in the last decades into one of the most voracious materialist societies in history. . . . An ever greater number of people begin to desire an ever greater number of things in a world of scarcity and insufficiency. . . . The result is the advent of a sentiment of collective frustration that results in violence. (*Jornal do Brasil* 22 Jan. 1980)

Social science pundits were not too far behind in "theorizing" the results of this contact. The 1980 report on criminality cited above blamed not only the relative proximity of the rich and poor but also its virtual analogue in the media, which allowed the poor to see the lifestyle of the rich. Television was blamed for propagating "a consumerist culture that exacerbates unlimited desire of always having more" (Brazil 1980b, 279), leading to the "aggravation of pathological factors, increasing the likelihood of crime" (294). Some authors of the study pointed to "the visibility of relative social inequities in urban settings" (299) as a more powerful determinant of crime than absolute poverty itself, and worried

about the "the mental shock of the mother who leaves her hungry children in the *favela* to clean the kitchen of the elite family" (300). Television and media influences were often cited as a cause of crime by showing both impossibly wealthy lifestyles and "criminal ways" to achieve them. Director of Metropolitan Police Heraldo Gomes explained:

> What occurs is the law of imitation, because man has the tendency to imitate good acts and bad acts, and by watching "canned films" on television winds up copying the actions of bandits and acting like them. (*Jornal do Brasil* 10 Oct. 1980)

At one point, Minister of Justice Ibrahim Abi-Ackel even suggested a "gentleman's agreement" to television station owners to curb the showing of films that "could induce violence" (*Jornal do Brasil* 22 Jan. 1980).

These discourses proposed that the poor were out of place, and as result of that "mis-placement", they began to imagine lifestyles they should not aspire to. "Urban violence" in Brazil became, as Cerqueira (1987) points out, a site to discuss concrete social conflicts at the time of the transition to democracy. All of the ways to "solve crime" were intimately tied to dimensions of citizenship: as criminal acts represented violations against the private property of the wealthy, they raised the question of the social citizenship and entitlements of the poor. As General Reynaldo Mello de Almeida conceded, "extensive policing is a palliative, not an action. The solution will be difficult to find, because the economic problem will never be solved. In this place there will always be rich and poor" (*O Globo* 8 Jan. 1981).

These urban issues forced the question of the limits of citizenship: what responsibility does the state have toward the poor? Are poor persons entitled to full civil rights? Exclusionary responses to such questions relied on notions of the poor being "out of place" and made possible a transition to what Morse and Hardoy have called a condition of "permanent marginality," in which the number of poor in cities is such that official concerns transformed from a search for solutions to poverty to a search for methods of its containment. Another important part of this shift was the departure from moral explanations for crime.

[6.] Demographic Explanations

These geographical images, of a city besieged, of the poor out of place, of belts of poverty, were intimately tied to "demographic" discourses of criminality, in contrast to a purely "moral" ones. Moral explanations for crime and the poor admit the possibility of reform, as the individual criminal's conscience can be reached by intervention, while purely "demographic" explanations deny such a possibility. A typical statement of this demographic discourse is found in the National Development Plan, which explained "crime" in terms of "urban growth":

> As a result of the negative reflexes of rapid urban growth on the quality of life, most markedly in the larger metropolitan areas, the improvement of security services in these metropolises becomes of eminent importance. (Brazil 1980a, 153)

Part of the problem seemed to be the uncontrollability and mobility of the poor: internal migrations have "direct repercussions in certain types of crime, making contraband trade easier, facilitating drug trafficking, and enabling the evasion of delinquents" (Brazil 1980a, 185). Similarly, in the special report commissioned by the Justice Department, the causes of crime were explained as a product of "a generalized neurosis that seems be a constant of *Homo Urbanus* of our times" (Brazil 1980b, 178). Crime, supposedly though a natural propensity of "man's nature, of his society and of his culture" (185), was brought about by the urban conditions that make crime more attractive to many. Another report, the *Região Metropolitana do Grande Rio*, echoed these themes, and went so far as to point to the specific regions from which "criminals" migrated:

> A large part of the criminal youth who act in the state of Guanabara . . . is from the areas of the Baixada Fluminense, Niteroi, Teresópolis. . . . The increase in crimes reflects the problem of insecurity of populations of rural origin, little adapted to urban standards. Violence is therefore product of structural factors: the metropolitan system has the capacity to attract migrant populations, but not to absorb it. (Brazil 1979, 213-4)

One implication of this kind of reasoning was that solutions depended on "demographic control" of the poor rather than reformist or "civilizing" solutions. A city official contended that the favored solution to this problem was forced family planning: "only those who can raise and educate children should have them" (*Jornal do Brasil*, 12 Oct. 1980). Ex-Mayor Marcos Tamoyo agreed, arguing that "a lack of national family planning will . . . lead to a decline of already low levels of quality of life" (*Jornal do Brasil*, 12 Oct. 1980).

Even when moral discourses of the poverty and criminality did appear during the period, they were mitigated by demographic explanations:

> Among the causes are economic difficulties . . . internal migration throws a
> large quantity of people without means of survival into cities. I also see that
> the fear of God is disappearing. (*Jornal do Brasil* 22 Jan. 1980)

The fact that demographic discourses were dominant, despite the presence of occasional moral discourses, had significant consequences for the construction of citizenship of the poor. Instead of older-style "solutions" to the social problems of the poor—such as the religious interventions and social work of the 1950s—the emphasis now became one of dealing with excess population without regard for individual moral reform. In addition to this, crime came to be understood in significantly different ways.

[7.] New Criminalities

If the poor were constructed as out of place in the city, and as beyond the intervention of traditional social services, a third type of discourse constructed the image of the changing nature of crime, such that it represented a threat to the social order that must be eliminated. The "new criminal" emerged from the slums, but he represented a new type of threat; his motivations were not hunger or poverty, but rather disruption of the social order. He was likened to a "communist subversive" who when incarcerated turned prisons into dens of vice. This new type of criminality called forth extreme responses that applied to the poor at large. The slum, by association, became a source of an alternate order that threatened the order of the city. It was in the *favela* that children were initiated into the world of vice and crime, but instead of representing an uncivilized world, as had been the case in the 1950s, this now became a world deemed to be beyond normalization and

integration. This is directly relevant to dimensions of citizenship: the construction of a "new criminality" is the construction of a collective identity that frustrates "normal" expectations of the poor and is therefore outside of the social contract. This in turn justifies policies and practices that violate civil rights in order to protect the social fabric.

A debate in 1979 about prison reform, and a proposal to release prisoners with good records to free up funds, was met with a lot of public hostility. Attorney Paulo Torres argued against this reform on the basis that many "irreformable" prisoners would be released, including some that would have thirty year sentences reduced to fifteen due to good behavior:

> This is a highly dangerous criminal who would never be reformed in such little time, especially inside a penitentiary system without occupation. . . . It would open the door to criminals, when it would be more important to increase the number of prisons. (*Jornal do Brasil* 25 May 1979)

The rise of new forms of organized crime suggested to many that a new kind of response was called for. Criminologist Virgilio Donnici contended that "we have entered the acute phase of crime and from now on it will only get worse. Today's criminals don't act like the ones from yesteryear, and are everyday more sophisticated" (*Jornal do Brasil* 10 Oct 1980). Secretary of Justice Erasmo Martins Pedro concurred, arguing that as many as half of all prisoners were "highly dangerous" and beyond reform, which for him meant that "the federal government should build maximum security prisons in the interior or on islands" (*Jornal do Brasil* 27 Jan. 1980).

The "new criminality" was described as resembling the threat of communism. One feature that distinguished this new threat from mere "chicken thievery" (*ladrão de galinhas*) was that crime was no longer simply carried out by needy persons. A bank robbery in February of 1980, for instance, was noted because of the "unusual characteristics of the criminals" who "were well dressed, did not commit violence, and did not use foul language (*Jornal do Brasil* 1 Feb. 1980). It was concluded that the new kind of criminality was motivated by the desire to disrupt the social order. As Francisco Gama Lima, president of the private security firm *Agents*, noted in an interview, the new criminality is not motivated by hunger, but rather by the need for "getting revenge from the system" (*Jornal do Brasil* 27 Nov. 1980).

These discourses served to construct the image of a particularly threatening internal enemy. An armed confrontation between a famous criminal, José Jorge Saldanha, and members of the police escalated to a standstill for several hours. The spectacular confrontation between the lone heavily armed criminal, trapped in the third floor of an apartment, and as many as four hundred policemen, came on the heels of a "wave" of bank robberies attributed to the *Comando Vermelho* (Armorim; Lima 1994). As one of the partners of the besieged fugitive later reported:

> The hunting season against us was open; we were completely demonized. The words are not innocent: we were "commandos," . . . and if this wasn't enough, we were also "red," an adjective that awakens old and mortal reflexes in the police and in the military. (Lima 1991, 45)

A deputy in congress distinguished between old and new styles of crime, and the ways in which the new style of crime violated traditional boundaries, unlike the kinds of crimes:

> Which have always happened since Cain and Abel, for various motives including the defense of honor and of life. [Today there is] . . . a terror that leads thousands of families not to leave their homes at night, fearing the worst. (*Discursos no Congresso Nacional II* 5/10/1980)

No longer confined to the city's slums, this form of criminality was "out of place." Its motives were different than simple need, criminals were no longer reformable, and the responses to this sort of crime, as with other threats to the social order such as communist infiltration, needed to be more swift and decisive.

[8.] Non-Citizens and Incomplete Panopticisms

Taken together, discourses that constructed the poor as invading the city, that offered demographic explanations of criminality, and that constructed the image of "a new criminality," had profound implications for the citizenship of the poor in the new democracy. Representations of the poor as being "out of place" constructed their non-citizenship by relegating them to areas beyond the reach of the state and by reinscribing their lack of social entitlement. Demographic explanations for crime denied the possibility of reform and precluded disciplinary strategies aimed at the poor. And discursive constructions of the new criminal justified increasingly violent punishments and the

withholding of civil rights from the poor. While changes in the country's political and economic landscape at the time of the transition to democracy implicitly and explicitly raised several questions about the limits of citizenship, these discourses offered very exclusionary answers. Preventative arrests were made legal in 1980, and in 1981, legislation imposed preventative arrests for minors accused of crimes. Extensive policing, and a greater presence of police forces in public spaces, was also implemented in 1981. That same year, the *Jury System Reform*, which expedited punishment and ended the "excessive rights" of the accused, was enacted. In terms of deaths at the hands of the state, Brazil now has one of the highest death rates in the world, despite having no formal death penalty (Americas Watch Committee).

Economic changes or increased crime do not in themselves explain calls for the reduction of civil rights or the expulsion of the poor from city centers. These calls were the result of signifying practices which functioned, as I have argued, as "cultural maps" of citizenship. This attention to cultural contestations over the meanings of the city's spaces has led to a focus on the "frontier effects" of citizenship, that is, the limits of its entitlements. Cultural contestations over "frontier effects" are intimately tied to meanings of place, and the "political inside and outside" that is the subject of these contestations becomes linked to discursive mappings of who belongs to what places. Just as Mouffe argues that the political identity of "citizen" implies in its construction the boundaries of a political space*,* it becomes possible to understand that contestations over citizenship imply boundaries and meanings about places, and that, conversely, debates over boundaries and places imply certain kinds of citizenships. In this case, the symbolic practices I have examined here served to "cut off" poor residents from full entitlement as citizens.

Certainly, Rio de Janeiro in 1980 does not stand alone as a city with spaces constructed as "besieged" and invaded by dangerous elements beyond the reach of disciplinary tactics. The symbolic construction of European metropolises invaded by immigrants, or of North American suburbs invaded by non-white urban criminals, not to mention the fear of crime in many Latin American capitals, represent similar constructions. As authors who have taken up the concept of "moral panic" have pointed out, such panics tend to arise in periods of economic crisis (Cohen; Hall). And while the late 1970s was a period of downward mobility of the middle class, and more importantly, of uncertainty

about the future, economic explanations are inadequate as downward trends were present much earlier. A more complete explanation would also have to include the uncertainties associated with the transition to democracy and with the future of the city. In a sense, the transition away from a dictatorship also meant a transition away from ordered and safe cities and very fixed political horizons.

A further component needs to be addressed, however. Although geographers have taken up Foucault's (1986) scant writings on "heterotopia" or places of alternate ordering (Shields; Soja 1990), scholars have only recently begun to explore incomplete disciplinary projects, and the ways that this incompleteness may make disciplinary projects unstable (Stewart). Disciplinary projects are never fully realized and never occupy all space. Strategies of enumeration, such as censuses, or of discipline, such as prisons, have notoriously always been incomplete in Brazil and in Rio de Janeiro (Chalhoub; Meade). "Proletarian Parks," for instance, were designed and built in Rio de Janeiro in the 1940s as a strategy to discipline workers and included mandatory lectures over loudspeakers about public morality. Only three such complexes were ever built and they did not function for very long (Conniff 1981). Furthermore, penitentiaries were always underfunded, and human rights activists began conducting a census of Rio de Janeiro's prisons in the 1990s due to the lack of complete institutional records (America's Watch Committee).

But panopticism has been incomplete in Brazil for another reason. Elites have always had an uneasy relationship with the integration of non-whites and the poor into Brazilian society. As students of the history of penitentiaries in Brazil have pointed out, even reformers were skeptical of the possibility of fully reforming the lower rungs of Brazilian society because of attributed genetic and innate deficiencies (Salvatore and Aguirre). The civilizing project always stood in opposition to the logic of innate deficiencies and simple exclusion, and the logic of the prison always existed in tension with the logic of expulsion. The transition to democracy and the transformations of the city simply foregrounded the question of citizenship for those groups whose integration into the city and society were always provisional. When these transformations raised the possibility of too many rights and of too much mobility into and within the city, lines of exclusion, violent punishment, and non-citizenship were re-drawn.

While social movements attempted to extend the boundaries of citizenship, "non-citizenship" was constructed through cultural re-mappings of the city that invalidated those rights. These discourses constructed the poor as "not belonging" to any proper place in the city, save those areas beyond the reach of the state, and justified repressive solutions to social problems in the period of democracy.[11] While social movements in the late 1970s and 1980s sought to reclaim the city and emphasize democratic access to urban services, these exclusionary discourses made it easier for middle class residents to dismiss their claims. On one hand, the non-citizenship of the urban poor and their "unworthiness" of rights made it difficult to construct claims that would be broadly accepted. Several scholars have written about the privatization and stark social separation that now characterize Brazilian cities, as middle class residents continue to flee public spaces for ever more exclusive enclaves (Caldeira 2000). On the other hand, *favelados* often drew lines between themselves and "criminals," which also mitigated against constructing collective claims (Zaluar 1983).

One of the implications of this retrenchment has been the way that human rights reforms and activism have been discredited. The first democratically elected governor of Rio de Janeiro, progressive Leonel Brizola, attempted human rights reforms with the police, but faced a severe backlash from the city's residents, who then voted him out of office for a candidate on a pro-order platform. In the years following the events recounted here, human rights activism was being discredited as "privilege for bandits" even as numerous violations of the human rights of *favela* residents were taking place (Caldeira 1991). A mass execution of residents of the Vigário Geral *favela* in 1993 by off-duty police officers was followed in 1994 by army blitzkrieg attacks and the occupation of the entire poorer northern side of Rio de Janeiro in a fantastic show of force. The mayor answered to protests from human rights groups by proclaiming that it made no sense to demand human rights in the *favelas* now when such rights had ever existed for residents of the *favelas* (*Estado de Sao Paulo* 1 Nov 94).

Acknowledgments

Notes

1. All translations from the Portuguese original were done by the author.

2. There are many interesting studies of the city-favela relationship. See Pino, Chalhoub, Meade, Conniff, Gay, Boschi (1987), and Zaluar (1983).

3. Representations of the city are regarded here as contested and competing "cultural practices of signification rather than referential duplicates" of the landscape itself (Barnes and Duncan 5).

4. Excluded from these were perspectives that might be used to reconstruct "popular" discourses, such as popular AM radio programs (the nationally syndicated *Gil Gomes*, for example) and popular songs or stories.

5. As Harvey puts it, in the capitalist city, "nobody quite knows what the right time and place for everything might be" (239).

6. For example, see Gregory, Barnes and Duncan, Agnew, and Shields.

7. See, for instance, Rabinow, and Stoler. For Latin America, see, Salvatore and Aguirre. There is still little work that explores this theme in more contemporary periods.

8. See, for instance, the following reports: Geiger, Guanabara State (1969), and Mattos. For a historical periodization of these earlier phases, see Pino (1996). For a discussion of the *Agache* Plan, see Stuckenbruck.

9. On the development of the neighborhood movement in Rio de Janeiro, see Boschi (1982, 1987). For a discussion of the strikes, the Worker's Party, and social movements during the transition, see Kowarick (1994).

10. Chantal Mouffe, for instance, suggests we understand new authoritarian projects in Eastern Europe as attempts to re-negotiate the insider/outsider boundary that was lost with the fall of communism (1992, 4).

11. This is far from unique, however, when other transitions to democracy are considered, particularly in their spatial dimensions. For a striking parallel in South Africa, see Christopher (2001)

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