UC Berkeley
UC Berkeley Previously Published Works

Title
Dangerous Spaces of Citizenship: Gang Talk, Rights Talk, and Rule of Law in Brazil

Author
Holston, James

Special issue: Strangely familiar

DANGEROUS SPACES OF CITIZENSHIP: GANG TALK, RIGHTS TALK AND RULE OF LAW IN BRAZIL

James Holston
University of California, Berkeley, USA

Abstract This article considers an apparently perplexing aspect of democratization in Brazil: the use by notorious criminal gangs (*comandos*) from the poor urban peripheries and prisons of the discourses of democratic citizenship, justice, and rule of law to represent their own organizations and intentions. I situate this use within an unsettling development in Latin America generally during the last 30 years: the coincidence nearly everywhere of increasing political democracy and increasing everyday violence and injustice against citizens. My discussion considers these new territorializations of power and violence and their consequences for citizenship, democracy, and urbanization. To bring them to light, I focus on public pronouncements by Brazilian criminal gang that typically combine rationalities of crime with those of democracy, citizen rights, rule of law, and revolution. I also compare them with public declarations made by the police. I analyze both in relation to the historically dominant paradigm of Brazilian citizenship that democratization destabilizes. I then evaluate this destabilization with regard to the new kinds of violence and paradigms of insurgent citizenship that have emerged as characteristics of urbanization and democratization worldwide.

Keywords Brazil, criminal gangs, democracy, insurgent citizenship, rule of law, urban peripheries

Brazilian democracy has advanced significantly in the last two decades. Indeed, it has pioneered innovations that place it at the forefront of democratic development worldwide. Yet precisely as democracy has taken root, new kinds of violence, injustice, corruption, and impunity have increased dramatically. This coincidence is the perverse paradox of Brazil's democratization. As a result, many Brazilians feel less secure under the political democracy they achieved, their bodies more threatened by its everyday violence than by the repressions of dictatorship (1964–85). At the same time, moreover, that a generation of insurgent citizens democratized urban space and key aspects of its planning, creating unprecedented access to resources, a climate of fear and incivility also came to permeate public encounters. These new estrangements produce an abandonment of public space, fortification of residence, criminalization of the poor, and support for police violence.

These conditions debilitate democracy. They erode a public sphere undeniably broadened by novel popular participation. In the domains of law and urban planning, for example, traditionally arenas of humiliation and oppression for the poor, popular mobilizations of national scale profoundly shaped the 1988 Citizen Constitution and its innovative principles of citizen participation and social justice. These innovations are particularly evident in its sections on righting the inequalities of urban life in Brazil. Nevertheless, the institutions of justice – particularly the courts and the police – have become even more discredited with democratization. Instead of its anticipated glories, Brazilians experience a democratic citizenship that seems simultaneously to erode as it expands, a democracy at times capable and at other times tragically incapable of protecting the citizen's body and producing a just society.[1]

Researchers have now examined many of these contradictions as they twist and turn through Brazilian society, taking shape in violence, police abuse, corruption, misrule of law, land conflicts, segregation, fortification, privatization, racism, and illness, often in studies that link these conditions.[2] However, providing a theoretical account of their relation to the process of democratization remains problematic. The difficulty is to account for them from within this process without dismissing them as aberrations and externalities, disrespecting democratic intentions, or predetermining antidotes on the basis of a convergence to ideal types modeled on particular and usually North Atlantic democracies. Given that the extraordinary global democratization of the last 35 years is overwhelmingly non-North Atlantic, occurring in societies of vastly different cultures and histories, such convergence of models seems as unconvincing theoretically as it is unlikely empirically. Even its suggestion strikes many proponents of democracy in Latin America and elsewhere as a new North Atlantic imperialism. If, as I think, neither convergence nor dismissal constitute adequate accounts, then democratic theory must be rethought in terms of the new conditions that characterize the current worldwide insurgence of democratic citizenships. As I argue below, planning theory and urban studies must be similarly reconceived to address the new spatializations of power inherent in these processes.

Of the new conditions, it is especially the widespread concurrence of democratic politics with systematic violence and injustice against citizens that reveals these limitations of theory and method. In many regions of the world, not only in Brazil and Latin America, increasing everyday violations of *civil* citizenship in the form of urban violence and discredited judiciaries appear to accompany increasing political democracy. Indeed, their entanglement has become an intractable problem of emerging democracies worldwide.[3] For Brazilian democracy, it is a particularly bitter development. The victories of President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and his Workers' Party (PT) at all levels of government in the elections of 2002 seemed a resounding triumph for democratic politics and an insurgent citizenship of social justice. Those who pioneered new models of participatory planning achieved prominence in a new Ministry of Cities and elsewhere throughout national and local government. But after just three years, both his administration and party are beset by corruption scandals of unprecedented magnitude. To date, more than 20 percent of congress and many others at all levels of government have been implicated. Yet none of these officials is on trial or in jail. Although congress opened impeachment proceedings against more than 75 members, it has managed to revoke the political rights of only four. Two more resigned. Others have already been acquitted by secret congressional ballot, despite hard evidence of their guilt.[4]

At the same time that the political system of Brazil's democracy appears bankrupt, and both the public and the judiciary numb to its unending and unpunished corruptions, urban violence has mutated into the terror of organized crime. First in Rio de Janeiro, then São Paulo, and then elsewhere, gang-cartels (*comandos*) organized massive prison rebellions, during which they denounced the hell-hole conditions of state imprisonment, demanded justice, and killed their rivals. Their organizations spread to the poorest urban neighborhoods where they both run the drug trade and supply social services the state neglects. Beginning in May 2006, the Primeiro Comando da Capital (PCC), repeatedly paralyzed the city of São Paulo, attacking police stations, government buildings, banks, buses, and prisons. Almost 200 police, guards, suspected gang members, and innocents have been killed, many summarily executed. These insurrections reveal gross failures of the state and its justice system to enforce the law, protect citizens, respect the rights of prisoners, and develop policies of security beyond truculence. Not surprisingly, paramilitary gangs have arisen in some places to combat the criminal gangs, exercise vigilantism, and – of course – take over their lucrative criminal enterprises. The irony is not lost on Brazilians that the congress, the comandos, and the police sustain organized crime. All use the language of rights. All discredit democratization. This delegitimation shows Brazilians, to their enormous frustration, that political democracy does not necessarily generate a rule of law that is democratic and that without democratic justice, democracy corrodes.

Thus Brazilian democratization is at a critical point. It has not been able to overcome the violence and impunity that lacerate all social groups, discredit the judiciary and the police, and undermine the democratic rule of law. At the same time, however, these counter-configurations of democracy have not prevented

its consolidation in significant measures of insurgent citizenship that subvert still-dominant paradigms of rule. By insurgent, I mean a counter-politics that destabilizes the dominant regime of citizenship, renders it vulnerable, and defamiliarizes the coherence with which it usually presents itself to us. Brazil's violence has not prevented the extensive legitimation of this insurgent democratic citizenship and its adoption as the language in which the most diverse sectors of society, including organized crime, frame their interests. For the time being, neither democracy nor its counters prevails in Brazil. Rooted yet rotted, they remain entangled, unexpectedly surviving each other.

In this article, I analyze one of the most perplexing examples of this entanglement. It offers strange proof of the generalized legitimacy of democratic discourse throughout Brazilian society. I refer to the use by notorious criminal gangs of the language of democratic citizenship, rights, and justice to represent their own organizations and intentions.[5] These criminal *comandos* originated during the early 1990s as gangs within the state prisons of Rio and São Paulo. They initially formed in large measure to defend the rights of prisoners in the horrifically abusive prison systems. This defense was central to their recruitment and organization of members. Today, however, they command vast operations in drug trafficking, extortion, and other criminal enterprises, both inside and outside prisons. To the chronic embarrassment of officialdom, these activities are coordinated from within the prisons via an underground network of cell-phones. Ensconced as well in some of the poorest neighborhoods of the urban peripheries, they dominate a certain amount of territory in major cities with a rule that distributes summary execution along with diapers, milk, medication, and employment, combining terror and public works. In this combination, they are not unlike the state itself.[6]

Regularly, these criminal cartels also launch surprisingly well-coordinated attacks against entities of government they claim commit crimes against prisoners. They consider themselves at war with the security apparatus of the state. They target especially the persons and property of the justice system, assassinating police, prison staff, prosecutors, and judges and sponsoring 'mega-rebellions' in the prisons. In São Paulo, the PCC has also attacked public transportation, burning empty buses in campaigns of violence that paralyzed the city repeatedly in 2006. Their violence against rival and apostate gang members is exceptionally brutal. They do not merely kill. They torture and mutilate, decapitating, disemboweling, and burning the bodies of their enemies.

The *comandos* occasionally make public pronouncements, typically during a prison rebellion, city assault, or police operation. Curiously, this gang talk takes the form of rights talk. It justifies crime and terror with the rationalities of citizenship. Thus, on 24 February 2003, the Comando Vermelho issued a proclamation to the city of Rio imposing a shutdown of commerce in the name of justice. It ended with the following:

> So ENOUGH, we only want our rights, and we are not going to give them up, so shops had better keep their doors closed until midnight on Tuesday [25 February 2003], and the one who dares to open his doors will be punished in one form or

> another [;] it's no use, we are not joking, those who joke are in politics with this total abuse of power and with this generalized robbery [;] the judiciary must begin to empty the prisons and act within the law before it is too late. If the laws were made to be followed, why this abuse? [7]

What can we make of such appeals to rights, justice, and the democratic rule of law by organized crime? What do they suggest about Brazilian democracy, its trajectory, and the social transformations it induces? Should they be taken as indicating anything about such matters? Or should we view them with skepticism, as nothing more than cynical attempts to dissimulate and mock? I confess that I have no certain answers to these questions, at least none regarding the deeper views of gang members. Moreover, I can only discuss the public discourse, as sustained ethnographic research inside these gangs is practically impossible and formal interviews notoriously unreliable. What is certain, however, is that the criminal gangs are crucial elements of both the new territorializations of power and violence and the new paradigms of citizenship in urban peripheries throughout Brazil and, indeed, throughout the global South that have taken shape during the extraordinarily intense processes of worldwide democratization and urbanization of the last 50 years. Efforts to actualize this democracy in the context of gargantuan cities and their metropolitan societies – efforts in planning, law, and administration – will necessarily encounter these gangs in control of or disputing significant extensions of urban territory. Thus to ignore the new territorializations of power and genealogies of citizenship the gangs instantiate is not only to perpetuate the errors of negligent, repressive, and incompetent states with regard to urban poverty and inequality. It is also to disable new conceptualizations of democratic and planning theory that must engage an urbanized planet and its globalized demands for citizen democracy.

The public discourses of the gangs offer distinct opportunities to probe this new urban cartography of democracy. As I do not have access to the inner deliberations of the gangs, I propose that a productive way to analyze this gang talk is by means of a triangulation: I can locate it in relation to the historically dominant paradigm of Brazilian citizenship that democratization destabilizes and evaluate this destabilization with regard to violence. My objective in this mapping is not to give a history of these criminal cartels or to attribute their growth solely to the injustices of this dominant paradigm of citizenship, though they are an important factor. Nor do I think that addressing these problems will end gang criminality and violence, though respecting prisoner rights will eliminate an important motivation for joining prison gangs.

Rather, my mapping will show that Brazil's democracy has thus far produced a dangerous, hybrid space of citizenship as a sphere of social change in which the legal and illegal, legitimate and criminal, just and unjust, and civil and uncivil claim the same moral ground of citizen rights and respect by way of contradictory social practices. This conjunction of opposites is certainly perverse. Nevertheless, it also indicates a fundamental characteristic of democratization in Brazil and elsewhere: the equalities of democratic citizenship always produce

new inequalities, vulnerabilities, and destabilizations, as well as the means to contest them. For example, the right of citizens to associate freely, considered a fundamental equality, nevertheless generates organizations of unequal capacities and powers – such as the *comandos* themselves (criminal and para-military), neighborhood associations, and real estate lobbies. As citizens advance their interests, these groups are set against each other in the arena of citizenship. In this way, equality predictably becomes the foundation on which new inequality is built and challenged.[8] If that is so, then it follows that citizenship's contradictions are internal and not incidental or extraneous to democracy's theory. It must also be the case, therefore, that significant contradiction, paradox, and disjunction are inevitable in the development of all democracies, established and emergent. Hence, if we cannot consider Brazil's democratic development abnormal for being disjunctive, the problem to investigate is the specificities of its contradictions.

With regard to Brazil, my example suggests that even at the perverse outer bounds of Brazilian society – in prison-based gangs and police-based death squads – it has become standard practice to use the language of democracy to explain their murderous violence. This slippage between the legal and the illegal is a deeply paradoxical development for political democracy. But as I have shown in my study of Brazilian citizenship (Holston, 2008), the productions of the illegal and the legal have long been reciprocating processes in Brazil, a symbiosis key to the perpetuation of the dominant regime of citizenship. Should we be surprised that they now share the legitimation of rights talk? That is, my example of gang talk indicates the consolidation of a common language of democratic measure, a new commensurability we might call it, that destabilizes, challenges, and unevenly replaces an older public sphere of citizenship grounded in very different values and justifications. It suggests, moreover, the limitations of democratic theory that focuses on narrow yet totalizing conceptions of the political and the advantages of the anthropological view that considers the lived and contingent conditions of citizenship – however messy and disjunctive – as a better means of understanding contemporary forms of democratic development in insurgent citizenships and disjunctive democracies.

Thus I suggest that democratization destabilizes in specific ways that often entail specific kinds of violence. Democratization does not account for all de-stabilization and violence in contemporary Brazil. Other important processes of social change – such as urbanization and neoliberalization – also destabilize entrenched social, spatial, and economic regimes. Each of these processes brings its own kinds of disruption, and each gets entangled with the others. Therefore, I stress that there are many causes for the increase in violence and injustice in Brazil and that my objective is not to provide either a sufficient or global expla-nation. Nor do I suggest that Brazil has become both more democratic and more violent primarily because of a clash between entrenched elites and insur-gent citizens. There are many contributing factors. Rather, my aim is to identify some of those associated with democratization and to avoid reducing my analysis to any one factor. To map the incendiary mix of the legal and the illegal that marks my example of gang talk, I must therefore begin with the

historic paradigm of citizenship that establishes the terms of democracy's destabilizations.

Differentiated citizenship

I ask you to consider this paradigm because its formulation of citizenship is still current and in many ways dominant in Brazil. Thus, the history I outline is ever-present. It turns contemporary citizenship into a hybrid mix of the entrenched and the insurgent. The history of citizenship is important precisely because insurgence bubbles up from the past in places where present circumstances seem propitious for an irruption, destabilizing the present and rendering it fragile. In this view, the present is like a bog, with history leaking through; it is full of holes, gaps, contradictions and misunderstandings, right alongside all the taken-for-granted assumptions that give the present its apparent coherence. The ethnographic present is something to be acted upon by historical investigation because we realize that the past always leaks through, disturbing the present and breaking it up into heterogeneous elements that are recomposed and transformed. In the case at hand, as history haunts the present, it provides possible sites for the destabilization of the older paradigm of citizenship. Such destabilization provokes the kind of violent reactions we find under democracy. Thus, my objective is not to give a complete historical account of Brazilian citizenship, either in the brief discussion here or in the larger work from which it is drawn. Rather, I use history as an argument about the present.

I analyze the historical trajectory of Brazilian citizenship as a combination of two considerations: one is formal membership, based on principles of incorporation into the nation-state. The other is the substantive distribution of the rights, meanings, institutions, and practices that membership entails to those considered citizens. This combination produced a distinctive formulation of citizenship in Brazil, one distinguished from its competitors on the world stage of nation-states through the deliberate constructions of 18th and 19th-century Brazilians: a national citizenship that was, from the start, universally inclusive in membership and massively inegalitarian in distribution. This inclusively inegalitarian citizenship has been remarkably consistent in maintaining its principles of both incorporation and distribution since the inception of the Brazilian nation-state 200 years ago. Indeed, membership became more inclusive with independence in 1822 and differentiation more severe with the foundation of the Republic at the end of the century. When Vargas introduced social citizenship based on urban labor in the 1930s, he (and the military dictatorship later) perpetuated this differentiated citizenship by modernizing it, that is, by adapting it to the new circumstances of a modern, urban, industrial economy and society. To distribute rights differentially, the Brazilian formulation of citizenship requires the use of social differences that are not the basis of national membership, but prior or other to it. It uses social differences of education, property, race, gender, occupation, and the like to create legal and extralegal inequalities, generating a gradation of differential rights among citizens, and it focuses its energies on the distribution and maintenance of such privileges. I describe it,

therefore, as a differentiated citizenship in which such social qualifications organize its various political, civil, and social dimensions and regulate its distribution of powers. Thus, most rights have been available only to particular kinds of citizens and exercised as the privilege of particular social categories.

When elites sought to consolidate this conceptualization of differentiated citizenship in response to the great 19th-century changes of independence and the abolition of slavery, their solution was twofold.[9] To control political citizenship, they made suffrage direct and voluntary but restricted it to the literate. This restriction denied most Brazilians their political rights for a century, from 1881 to 1985. To dominate civil and economic matters, they created a real estate market to legitimate the ownership of private property and finance the immigration of free labor. But, adapting the English theorist of colonialism E.G. Wakefield, they kept land prices high and wages low so that the working masses would have practically no legal access to property and independent production and would be forced, as a result, to remain a source of semi-servile cheap labor. Thus, political and civil citizenship developed in step: both became more restrictive as Brazil changed from an imperial nation based on slave labor to a republican nation based on wage labor over the course of the 19th century. Moreover, both restrictions remained in force until the urbanization of Brazil, beginning in the 1940s, resulted in the construction by the poor of the massive peripheries around Brazil's major cities. In these peripheries, a new formulation of citizenship emerged.

As a result of the distribution of inequality that organizes this difference-specific citizenship, therefore, most Brazilians have been denied political rights, excluded from property ownership, forced into segregated and often illegal conditions of residence, refused access to justice, and estranged from the law. This historic paradigm of citizenship is not an archaic embodiment of backland Brazil. It is a still dominant aspect of its modernity.

The exclusion from property had a number of profound consequences for Brazilian law and law's relation to citizenship. It had the effect of forcing most Brazilians to reside illegally, making illegality if not the norm, then the predominant condition of settlement. For most citizens, the effect was overwhelming. Their status as illegal residents subverted their civil citizenship. It did so in two ways: first, by placing them on the other side of the law, the condition of having to live illegally alienated citizens from law generally, diminishing their access to its rights and justice, undermining it as an institution of and for citizenship, and rendering it 'for enemies'; second, their exclusion from the legal ownership of land also denied them the civil standing that legitimate property ownership is conventionally understood to create.[10] This estrangement from law is precisely the meaning of the classic Brazilian adage, 'for friends, everything; for enemies, the law'.

Particularly in relation to property, law became estranged from citizenship in the new 19th century nation as it became a system of stratagem and bureaucratic entanglement, deployed by state and subject alike to create invincible complication, obfuscate problems, neutralize opponents, and, above all, legalize usurpations. This misrule of law, as I call it, emerged from its colonial and

imperial circumstances as a brilliantly constructed scheme of alibis for the absence of effective social regulation, a form of social management in which more law was the corrective for the ineffective application of previous law and meant more opportunity for entanglement and usurpation. In this context, obeying the law had low status, because to do so signified weakness. Compliance was therefore a means of humiliation, directed at opponents and the poor. Conversely, manipulating, breaking, or choosing when to obey the law signified power and became a habit of wealth. Most Brazilians, however, did not have the resources to use the law in these ways. Overwhelmingly, their exclusion from political rights denied them participation in making laws, and their exclusion from property made illegality the norm of their residence.

These denials of citizenship rights, alienations from the legal system, and entrenched conditions of illegality meant, moreover, that many Brazilians regularly suffered repression, violence, and injustice. The regime of differentiated citizenship has always accommodated high levels of public and private violence, corruption, police abuse, impunity, judicial discredit, scofflawism and privatizations of justice and security, in addition to the structural violence of malnutrition, abysmal health care, and all the reduced life chances of massive poverty. We have only to think of the alliance between public powers and private forces, of the appropriation of the public by the private that characterizes *coronelismo* to realize that much of the privatization of justice and security that we denounce today follows an old pattern. In other words, the current violence has many elements that derive from and are sustained by the differentiated formulation of citizenship that disempowers most Brazilian citizens and increases their inequality. Indeed, the systematic violence inherent in this citizenship has never been in doubt and its hostility to equal rights and social justice has always been evident – as Washington Luís, governor of the state of São Paulo and future president (1926–30) confirmed on the campaign trail in 1920 with his famous remark: 'The social question is a question of the police.'

Although urban Brazil is surely violent today, and violent in different ways than before, analysts regularly present the violence and terror under which the poor live as new. They are not. Thus, the commonly heard nostalgia for the civility of Brazilian public space before current democratization – to the aesthetic pleasures of its social heterogeneity and its race-mixing – misses the crucial point: Often advanced by democracy's critics, it ignores that this 'peace of the street' was only possible because it was maintained by a discriminatory and repressive regime of citizenship that made certain that everyone knew their place and responded severely to threats of displacement.

Democratic destabilizations

The paradigm of differentiated citizenship remains contemporary, having survived – indeed nourished – every political regime over the last 200 years, thriving under monarchy, military dictatorship, and electoral democracy. However, some of its conditions – exclusion from property, denial of political rights, misrule of law – changed as the majority of Brazilians became urban

citizens. After the 1940s, they moved massively to cities, built the peripheries, and engaged in a different formulation of citizenship. In the context of these autoconstructed peripheries, the very same historical sites of differentiation – political rights, landed property, residential illegality, misrule of law, servility – fueled the irruption of an insurgent citizenship that destabilized the differentiated. Although these elements continue to sustain the regime of differentiated citizenship, they are also the conditions of its subversion as the urban poor gained political rights, became property owners, made law an asset, became modern consumers, and achieved personal competence through their experience of the city.

In such ways, the lived experience of the periphery became both the context and the substance of an urban citizenship – one that has generated significant democratic innovation in law, government, and practice. By urban citizenship, I mean a citizenship that refers to the city as its public sphere and to right-claims addressing urban practices as its substance – claims concerning residence, neighborhood life, infrastructure, transportation, consumption, and so forth. This insurgence has cracked open the principles of differentiation that for centuries legitimated a particularly inegalitarian formulation of citizenship. It turned the poor resident of the periphery into a new citizen and launched a citizenship that has transformed Brazil.

We would hardly expect, however, this insurgent urban citizenship to be stable and coherent in its expansions. It too has holes into which it collapses. Exactly because the old formulas of differentiated citizenship persist, new incivilities and injustices have arisen with democratization. Even though Brazilians successfully institutionalized mass political citizenship, democratized urban space, and pioneered new practices of law, many basic aspects of democratic citizenship remain unrealized. Hence, the intertwining of the differentiated and the insurgent is unstable and has contradictory effects. It erodes the coherence of taken-for-granted categories of domination that gave daily life its sense of order and security. If it did not, it would be inconsequential.

But this entanglement also provokes violent reactions that undermine the new democratic practices and institutions, some with the objective of restoring the old paradigms of order. These reactions are articulated precisely around the historic sites of citizen differentiation, and they shape the conditions that characterize this contradictory period of Brazil's democratization, including criminal and police violence, incivility in public encounters, criminalization of the poor, indignation at impunity, massive property conflicts, new privatizations of justice and security, and popular support for violent measures of social control. The attempts to restore the old paradigms do not generate these attributes alone, as there are other factors and types of destabilization. But insofar as this engagement of citizenships provokes democratic change, democracy brings its own kinds of violence that irrupt where it destabilizes older formulations of order and repression.

Emblematic of this unstable mix of old and new formulations of citizenship is the high level of everyday street violence perpetrated by both criminals and police. So much has now been written about this violence that I only need

observe that violent criminality increased continuously in Brazil since the early 1980s to the point that by the mid-1990s, the rates of homicide in most of the country's metropolitan regions ranked among the highest in the world.[11] In São Paulo during this period, it was around 65 per 100,000 inhabitants or more than 6500 homicides per year. However, among young men, ages 15–24, the homicide rate in 2002 was an extraordinary 247 per 100,000! Moreover, the police have committed about 10 percent of the homicides in São Paulo's metropolitan region in the past 15 years. They are therefore co-responsible for the high levels of violence.[12] Furthermore, most murders remain uninvestigated and un-punished. Indeed, the same is true for crimes of all types. Rather, impunity reigns. Hence, the population's distrust of the police as well as the courts is based on good evidence.

Nevertheless, these increases in everyday violence in the context of dis-credited institutions of law and order have not prevented significant expansions of either formal or substantive democracy in Brazil. They have not hindered the widespread diffusion of its values of citizen rights and dignity. This combination of democracy, violence, and injustice generates an overwhelming sense of perversity and instability in contemporary experience. Moreover, it is at the heart of the outrage that the key agents of everyday violence – police and criminals – both voice in reaction to the destabilizations of the present, which to the police threaten their taken-for-granted social order and to the criminals expose the egregious failures of that same order. Both sorts of violence appear in reaction to its perceived unraveling. Police violence appears as a recourse to re-establish that order; criminal violence appears as a consequence of its being undone.

Let us look at several public proclamations by police and *comandos*, made in reaction to their perceptions of the present, to substantiate this argument. We will see that they both refer to democracy's rights and the rule of law and, moreover, that both resignify them to justify violence. However, they do so in opposite ways and perhaps with opposite ends at stake.

During the transition to electoral democracy in the mid-1980s, the human rights movement that had originated in the demand for amnesty for political prisoners shifted its focus to defend the human rights of common prisoners. It vigorously denounced police abuse and exposed the degradations of Brazilian prisons, condemning, in other words, the historic regime of citizenship that was business-as-usual for the police. As many have analyzed – none more astutely than Caldeira (2000) – police reaction against the human rights campaign was swift and violent. Here is a passage from the Manifesto of the Association of Police Chiefs of São Paulo, directed to the city's population on 4 October 1985, and widely distributed among police units. The chiefs made this declaration at a crucial moment in the process of democratization. They released it at the peak of the campaign for the first direct popular elections for mayor since the dictatorship. Moreover, it was during a period when the first directly elected state governor, Franco Montoro (1983–7), was trying to reform police use of lethal force. Predictably, the police chiefs attacked this initiative, savaging the human rights project and its supporters:

> The situation today is one of total anxiety for you and total tranquility for those who kill, rob, and rape. Your family is destroyed and your patrimony, acquired with a lot of sacrifice, is calmly being reduced. Why does this happen? You know the answer. Believing in promises, we chose the wrong governor, the wrong political party: the PMDB. How many crimes have occurred in your neighborhood and how many criminals were found responsible for them? You also know this answer. They, the bandits, are protected by so-called human rights, something that the government considers that you, an honest and hardworking citizen, do not deserve.

In this argument, the police evoke human rights according to the historic paradigm of differentiated citizenship, in which rights and justice are privileges of certain social categories, essentially privileges of those who have the power and resources to manipulate the legal system. According to this logic, human rights for criminals are nothing more than 'privileges for bandits' – as the expression popularized during this period puts it and as Caldeira (2000) analyzes. If justice and its rights are privileges and if the majority of Brazilian citizens are denied them by a state that is indifferent or incompetent in protecting their right to security, it is clearly an outrage to provide them to criminals. In terms of my analysis of citizenship, therefore, the police chiefs use the differentiated order of citizenship to undermine the insurgent. Their 'solution' is not to condemn the traditional order by demanding that human rights become available to all Brazilians as absolute attributes of their citizenship. Rather, they use the historic order to condemn democracy and its human rights for abetting criminal violence and to justify their violent repression of civilian criminal suspects – escalating progressively during this period from just over 500 killings in 1989 to 1470 in 1992.

This same logic is also evident in the policies of the next two governors of São Paulo, Orestes Quércia (1987–91) and Luiz Antonio Fleury Filho (1991–5). When the number of police killings started to rise considerably in 1989 as a result of these policies, Fleury, at that point Quércia's secretary of public security, declared:

> The fact that this year there were more deaths caused by the military police means that they are more active. The more police in the streets, the more chances of confrontations between criminals and policemen. . . From my point of view, what the population wants is for the police to act boldly.[13]

Both the police chiefs and the governors evoke the moral ground of citizen rights and dignity as a means, perversely, of denying it. They portray rights and dignity as unavailable to the majority to justify their continued negation. Because they are unavailable to the majority, they should be unavailable to criminals. But who are the criminals? Before they are convicted, they are suspects. As the police generally view the poor as criminally suspect, the majority are suspects and should be denied human rights as a matter of security. This logic of security evokes citizenship, therefore, to undermine democracy, to disarticulate its language of insurgent values and common measures. If we may take as evidence the countless accusations of police abuse and corruption throughout Brazil – documented since the beginning of democratization by

international human rights organizations and Brazilian citizens – these efforts to encourage police violence and to limit police and prison reform have been largely successful.[14]

Nevertheless, the police have not remained entirely immune to democracy. Within a decade after the manifesto just cited, the Military Police of the State of São Paulo felt compelled to change its public image. Adopting new initiatives, such as community policing, it tried to counter its reputation as an institution that abused citizens on a daily basis. It developed a new website in 2001 that framed the institutions and actions of the police in terms of democratic citizenship:

> The 1988 Constitution brought a new concept that became strong in our society: *citizenship*. People became more aware of their rights, more demanding in relation to the Institutions, and this was an invitation to those willing to serve well to revise their posture. The question was not only to expand services, but also one of attitude . . . With the new established order, something more was necessary than just placing ourselves in the clients' position and imagining new products. It was necessary to listen to them . . . It was an invitation to a cultural change . . . It was necessary to shift from a bureaucratic model . . . to a new model, the managerial, which was introduced at the Military Police of the State of São Paulo through a Program of Quality Improvement. Its goal is to get closer to the population via the improvement of the services rendered to the population.[15]

In this statement, the police announce a new model of operations and institutional identity, governed by the constitutional rules of an insurgent democratic citizenship. The passage indicates the legitimacy that this citizenship has acquired in contemporary Brazil. I also note in passing a peculiarity that catches the reader's attention. In the new model, citizens are presented as demanding clients and public security as a product the police offer. The organizing logic of this presentation mixes legal and market rationalities, unified by a notion of management. This packaging suggests that the military police are also following the neoliberal twist that global democratization took in the 1990s.

Yet if there has been a change in the discourse and even in the organization of the military police, the same cannot be said about their practice. In spite of efforts to reform the police by unifying some of their operations, instituting an ombudsman, creating community policing, and requiring that officers receive training in human rights, the police of São Paulo continue to kill civilians in very high numbers: 807 in the year 2000 and 703 in 2001. As investigations done by the police ombudsman reveal, the majority of those killed had no criminal history (Cunha, 2000). That these violations continue despite good intentions to control them indicates the resilience of these limits to Brazil's democratization. It suggests, moreover, another perversity: As my interviews with Brazilians of all social classes make clear, and as Caldeira (2000, 2002) has analyzed, police killings often correspond to the expectations of citizens who are frustrated with the inefficacy of the justice system and who do not believe in the likelihood of security in a social system with immense inequality. In this context, many citizens view police killing as necessary to their right to security.

Let me return in conclusion to the other indication of limit with which I began, to the public proclamations of the prison-based gangs that combine rationalities of crime, justice, and revolution. In spite of their barbarity, even these criminal comandos cannot do without the language of insurgent democratic citizenship. They talk about justice, rights, and the rule of law in ways similar to human rights reports, portraying themselves as the victims of entrenched social inequalities, abuses, and violence, in which they, Brazilian citizens, are victims of their own historic system of national citizenship. When asked in a 2001 congressional hearing if he were the leader of the PCC, Marcola replied:

> I am a person who fights for his rights. I have read the Penal Code and the Law of Penal Procedures, and I know that I am violated in all of my rights . . . So, [I ask you], where is the state? . . . In this context, what is society for me? . . . The PCC revolts against this hypocrisy.

The statute of the PCC (1993) – for these gangs have founding statutes – joins this discourse of rights to that of revolution and crime and ends with a battle cry:

> In coalition with the Comando Vermelho – CV and PCC – we will revolutionize the country inside the prisons and our armed fist will be the 'Terror of the Powerful,' oppressors, and tyrants who use the [prisons] as instruments of society's vengeance . . . Liberty, Justice, and Peace!!![16]

The declaration of the Comando Vermelho to the city of Rio that I cited at the outset uses an explicit talk of rights, citizenship, and rule of law to frame its demands. After denouncing the 'terror [that the government] practices in poor communities . . . causing the death of many innocent people' and expressing outrage that 'all this abuse ends in impunity as if nothing had happened', it proclaims:

> So now is the time to react firmly and with determination and to show this repulsive and oppressive politics that we deserve to be treated with respect, dignity, and equality, because if this doesn't come to pass, we will no longer stop causing chaos in this city, because it is absurd that all of this keeps happening and always remains unpunished.
>
> The judiciary also continues doing whatever it wants with its power . . . because it is violating with a total abuse of power all the established and legal laws and even the Lawyers are targets of hypocrisy and of abuse, and they can do nothing, so if someone has to put a stop to this violence that someone will have to be us because the people don't have how to fight for their rights, but clearly they know who is robbing and massacring them and this is what is important, because the time has passed when the bandit was from the favelas and behind prison bars, well, these days, those one finds living in a favela or behind prison bars are nothing more nothing less than humble and poor people, and, our President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, the country only counts on you to get us out of this mud, because does there exist a violence greater than robbing the public's money and killing the people with bad food, without a decent minimum salary, without hospitals, without work, and without food[?] Will this violence succeed in ending the violence, for violence generates violence[?] Is it possible that there exists among the prisoners of this country one

> who has committed a crime more heinous than killing a nation with hunger and misery[?] . . . So ENOUGH, we only want our rights . . . If the laws were made to be followed, why this abuse?

I do not intend to romanticize these statements. They are made by criminals whose lives have spiraled into the personal insanity of an especially cruel and terrorizing violence. They are made, moreover, to justify violence. Even though the *comandos* must be credited with introducing some protection within prisons – in particular, reducing rape – and educating prisoners about their rights, their dominion is based on other kinds of violence inside and outside jail. Further-more, although they demand a democratic rule of law, there is nothing demo-cratic about their own military-like organization, which 'admits no disputes of power in the leadership' (Art. 12). In that aspect, one might argue that they are like many other civil society groups. Yet their draconian order also requires members in liberty to make monthly contributions, on pain of 'death without pardon' (Art. 7). If the *comandos* began with the anger of revolutionaries, they are today also dedicated to the big business of narco-trafficking and racketeer-ing outside prison. They remain, in other words, violent criminal gangs.

Nevertheless, their language is striking, not only for its use of rights talk but also in its contrast with the manifesto of the police chiefs discussed earlier, who are also violent individuals justifying violence. The police manifesto undermines Brazil's new democracy by advocating violent and illegal practices. It denies democracy's legitimacy as the frame of reference for citizenship. For the chiefs, the law is still, as it has always been, 'for enemies'. In contrast, the gangs hurl their outrage at the historical abuses of this misrule of law and frame it in terms of the new democracy and its project of social justice. Their outrage is that of the Brazilian poor against the despicable quality of Brazilian citizenship. If, in the past, the oppressed found expression in millenarian religious movements, today they have a secular voice and it speaks in rights talk.

What is remarkable about this gang talk/rights talk is that even at this perverse extreme of society, insurgent democratic citizenship has become the common language of justification, the moral center of the illegal as well as the legal. This common measure, this new commensurability, refers to the city and beyond it to the nation as a public sphere to which all citizens have rights to a fair share. It refers to a public sphere of equivalencies founded on a democratic project of citizenship. The right claims of the poor – including those of the gangs – to this public constitute their understanding of a new democratic citizenship. Moreover, the new rights talk of the poor suggests that the law, which has oppressed them for centuries, has become something intimate to their sense of belonging to the public, something people want for themselves, no longer 'for enemies' but for citizens. We can only conclude that this change in the culture of law promises to be fundamental for the development of Brazilian democracy.

The perversity of this democracy continues to be that it has not yet realized significant social justice and egalitarian rule of law. However, Brazil has never had either under any regime. It is too late for the gang members to avoid an awful fate. But at least they tell us, even if they cannot show us, that Brazilians

have made social justice and rule of law central aspirations of their democracy and that Brazil's citizens, even at the extremes, have found in that project of citizenship a common ground.

Criminal gang cartels like the PCC and the CV are significant elements of contemporary peripheral urbanization in cities worldwide. No one concerned with metropolitan conditions – neither theorists nor practitioners of democracy, planning, law, and government – can neglect developing an understanding of their significance if they are to engage the forces of urbanization and democratization productively. The gangs are important to these processes not only because they control territory in urban peripheries through a combination of violence and administration. They are also important when they combine, as they often do, the rationalities of crime with those of democratic rights, rule of law, social justice, and revolution. This combination articulates in an extreme way the achievements and contradictions of the movements of insurgent democratic citizenship that have become characteristic responses of the urban poor to the new inequalities and segregations of global urbanization.

The sort of gang talk I have analyzed illustrates a fundamental feature of this new urbanism, namely, that the sites of contemporary metropolitan innovation frequently emerge at the very sites of metropolitan degradation. Moreover, in using concepts that structure the dominant public sphere, like 'the rule of law', the gang talk makes clear that without democratic practice, this structuring is likely to be a means of oppression. Whereas the undemocratic rule of law (in land use planning or in impunity, for example) segregates the urban poor in the peripheries and reduces them to a 'bare life' of servility and illegality, those very same conditions of inequality incite hinterland residents to demand a life worthy of citizens and to create new formulations of citizenship to achieve it. The criminal gang members are part of this inventive response, and their mix of the illegal and the legal, insurgent and entrenched, righteous and violent, are drastic instances of its destabilizations, confusions, and entanglements.

In its extreme register, the complexity of this gang talk also demonstrates that the identification of billions of people throughout the urban world as 'slum dwellers' misses more than it identifies by homogenizing a global population. The stigma of 'slum' squashes people into totalizing characterizations and, in that reductive way, reproduces an over-determination of urban poverty that has difficulty recognizing emergent spaces of invention and agency. To grasp the significance of criminal gangs as protagonists in the new urbanization and its insurgent citizenships, urban theory needs to conceptualize citizenship, democracy, and their new spatializations in ways that do not totalize these fields of analysis by defining them in terms of singular or homogenizing conditions like 'slums', 'elections' and even 'political rights'. Such conditions are surely components of these complex fields. But they are ones that investigation needs to problematize to undermine the imperial regimes of knowledge and policy that typically ground them in formal, ideal, universalizing, and ethnocentric definitions.

By problematize I mean demonstrating the consequences that both the unexamination of taken-for-granted assumptions and their defamiliarization

have for the construction of what passes for 'the real and the actual'. In the case at hand, I problematized conceptualizations of citizenship, democracy, and urbanization to show how their interaction produces a destabilizing sphere of social change, in which the gangs are among several actors – including para-military groups, the police, political parties, the national congress, and the judiciary – to use the legal and illegal, legitimate and criminal, and just and unjust to claim the moral ground of citizen rights. This triangulation of bed-fellows and strategies makes the significance of the gangs in processes of democratization and urbanization more evident. Moreover, it historicizes and particularizes citizenship and in this way debunks it as an ideal. Thus, by in-vestigating the substantive distribution of the rights, meanings, and practices that formal national inclusion and exclusion entails, it becomes clear that the combination of the formal and the substantive generates historically and culturally distinctive formulations of citizenship in every case. None is ideal, though some are advocated and imposed as such.

Furthermore, by understanding democracy as a field of destabilization as well as of electoral competition, I argued that all democracies, emergent and established, simultaneously expand and erode citizen rights. This conceptualiz-ation makes it difficult to assume that electoral democracy automatically produces a democratic rule of law or to construe some democracies as ideal and others as pathological. Similarly, I argued that contemporary mobilizations of the urban poor for citizenship develop not primarily through struggles of labor, as so much European social theory proposed, but through those of illegal resi-dence, house building, and land conflict. This shift in theoretical perspective makes it possible to appreciate the city itself not only as the context but also as the text of emerging paradigms of citizen power and vulnerability.

The kind of historical, ethnographic, and conceptual investigation that I emphasize, the kind that problematizes and defamiliarizes, is apt to detect new sites of creativity in the vastness of the contemporary metropolis. And what, after all, is the point of urban theory with respect to democracy and planning if not to bring to the surface the possibilities for alternative futures among the many conditions that exist as potentials in the city?

Notes
1. An expanded version of this article appears as part of chapter 8 in my book *Insurgent Citizenship: Disjunctions of Democracy and Modernity in Brazil* (Princeton University Press, 2008). For an analysis of the new paradigm of urban planning that developed from the 1988 Constitution, see also Caldeira and Holston (2005).
2. Some of the work on these topics includes Adorno (1995), Arantes (2000), Caldeira (2000), Chevigny (1995), Fix (2001), Holston (1991), Holston and Caldeira (1998), Paixão (1988), Paoli (1982), Pinheiro (1983), Scheper-Hughes (1992) and Zaluar (1985, 2004).
3. By civil, I refer not to the classic liberal separations of state and non-state, political society and civil society, public and private, or to any dichotomies that typically derive from the state/non-state divide. Rather, I use civil to specify the aspect of citizenship that concerns liberty and security and establishes justice as the means to

all other rights. Thus civil citizenship relates society and state ambiguously, not dichotomously: it differentiates society from the political system by defending the former from the abuses of the latter; however, it also integrates the two by utilizing state power to confront relations of inequality and domination within society itself and to shape people into certain kinds of citizens.

4. See Holston (2008), pp. 272–3 and 353, nn. 3, 4. for details of these corruptions scandals.

5. Teresa Caldeira and I developed the following analysis of violence and the perverse use of democratic discourses of rights together. See Caldeira (2006) for her interpretation of some of these issues.

6. The most important *comandos* are the PCC of São Paulo and the CV (Comando Vermelho) of Rio. In São Paulo, others include the Seta Satânica, CRBC (Comando Revolucionário Brasileiro da Criminalidade), and TCC (Terceiro Comando da Capital).

7. This and the other manifestoes I discuss were published in the major Brazilian newspapers (such as the *Estado de São Paulo*, the *Folha de São Paulo*, and the *Jornal do Brasil*) and may be consulted in their online archives. In my translation, I have retained original syntax as much as possible. The most useful work in the history and organization of the PCC I have found is a collection of articles and interviews published in an 'extra edition' of the monthly magazine *Caros Amigos* (28 May 2006).

8. This type of citizen conflict is especially apparent in democracies (often labeled liberal) where the state is committed to a constitution that provides citizens with formally equal rights but far less committed to providing them with equal means to realize those rights. As a result, the inequalities of class transform the formal equalities of citizenship into substantive differences, as those who have the social and economic means to take advantage of their formal rights outperform those who do not. See Bendix (1977) for more on this point. Thus, the unorganized poor in these democracies are typically formal citizens without much substantive citizenship. Democracies become disjunctive, therefore, because the development of democratic citizenship intrinsically generates both equality, inequality, and the terms of conflict that engage the two.

9. For a discussion of the term 'elites', see Holston (2008), pp. 18–19, 316n.6. With regard to citizenship, I use it to specify those who established and perpetuate the regime of differentiated citizenship to benefit themselves with rights exercised as privileges.

10. By that, I refer to the relation between property and personality, as political philosophy has called it, in which property ownership is the means to establish such fundamental qualifications of citizenship as independence, respect, responsibility, and capacity.

11. See note 1, above, for a sample of research.

12. For a discussion of police violence, popular support of it, and the failure of various government initiatives to control it, see Caldeira (2002) and Caldeira and Holston (1999). I would note that the most lethal year of police action in São Paulo was 1992, when they killed 1359 *suspected* criminals, in addition to the 111 at Casa de Detenção! In the same year, the Los Angeles police killed 25 and the New York 24 (Chevigny, 1995).

13. Luiz Antonio Fleury Filho, *Folha de São Paulo*, 28 November 1989. Fleury was subsequently elected governor (1991–5). See Caldeira (2000) for a fuller discussion of this period and its security policies.

14. Comaroff and Comaroff (2004) describe a different but related spectacle of re-ordering in postcolonial South Africa: not actual police violence, but dramatic enactments of crime and punishment by police, which aim to (re)establish plausible representations of social order and law in a world where the state seem incapable of ensuring either.

15. 'Qualidade na Policia Militar do Estado de São Paulo', Policia Militar do *Estado de São Paulo* [http://www.polmil.sp.gov.br/qtotal/evolucao.asp].

16. In 1995, a founder of the PCC, Misael Aparecido da Silva, drafted a manifesto (the 'Party of Crime') articulating the gang's identity. It became, along with the Statute, required reading for gang initiation. The manifesto combines the rationalities of crime and revolution under the banner of justice, demonstrating a fusion of criminal gangs, anti-capitalist politics, terrorist actions, and revolutionary parties found in subversive organizations worldwide – for example, the ANC, IRA, Black Panthers, FARC, and *jihad* groups – though, as the PCC acknowledges, members joined as and remain criminals. The manifesto states:

> The cowardly, capitalist, and corrupt . . . system itself created the Party [the PCC]. The Party is part of a dream of struggle; today we are strong where the enemy is weak. Our revolution . . . began in the penitentiary system and its objective is greater: to revolutionize the governmental system, to end this capitalist regime in which the rich grow and survive massacring the poorer class. As long as children die of hunger, sleep in the streets, have no opportunity for education and a dignified life, the violence will only increase. Today's children who humiliate themselves begging will tomorrow, through crime, transform their dreams into reality, with all hatred, all revolt, for the oppressed of today will be the oppressor of tomorrow. What is not won with words will be won with violence and a gun in hand. Our goal is to affect the powerful, the owners of the world, and the unequal justice; we are not criminals by choice and yes we are subversives and idealists. (reproduced in *Caros Amigos*, 28 May 2006: 12)

References

Adorno, S. (1995) 'Discriminação Racial e Justiça Criminal em São Paulo', *Novos Estudos* 43: 45–63.

Arantes, R.B. (2000) 'Ministério Público e Corrupção Política em São Paulo', in M.T. Sadek (ed.) *Justiça e Cidadania no Brasil*, pp. 39–156. São Paulo: Editora Sumaré/Idesp.

Bendix, R. (1977) *Nation-Building and Citizenship*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Caldeira, T.P.R. (2000) *City of Walls: Crime, Segregation, and Citizenship in São Paulo*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Caldeira, T.P.R. (2002) 'The Paradox of Police Violence in Democratic Brazil', *Ethnography* 3(3): 235–63.

Caldeira, T.P.R. (2006) '"I Came to Sabotage Your Reasoning!": Violence and Resignifications of Justice in Brazil', in J. Comaroff and J.L. Comaroff (eds) *Law and Disorder in the Postcolony*, pp. 102–49. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Caldeira, T.P.R. and Holston, J. (1999) 'Democracy and Violence in Brazil', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 41(4): 691–729.

Caldeira, T.P.R. and Holston, J. (2005) 'State and Urban Space in Brazil: From Modernist Planning to Democratic Interventions', in A. Ong and S.J. Collier (eds) *Global Assemblages: Technology, Politics, and Ethics as Anthropological Problems*, pp. 393–416. Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Chevigny, P. (1995) *The Edge of the Knife: Police Violence and Accountability in Six Cities of the Americas*. New York: New Press.

Comaroff, J. and Comaroff, J.L. (2004) 'Criminal Obsessions, after Foucault: Postcoloniality, Policing, and the Metaphysics of Disorder', *Critical Inquiry* 30: 800–24.

Cunha, L.G. (2000) 'Ouvidoria de Polícia em São Paulo', in M.T. Sadek (ed.) *Justiça e Cidadania no Brasil*, pp. 259–304. São Paulo: Editora Sumaré/Idesp.

Fix, M. (2001) *Parceiros da Exclusão*. São Paulo: Boitempo Editorial.

Holston, J. (1991) 'The Misrule of Law: Land and Usurpation in Brazil', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 33(4): 695–725.

Holston, J. (2008) *Insurgent Citizenship: Disjunctions of Democracy and Modernity in Brazil*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Holston, J. and Caldeira, T.P.R. (1998) 'Democracy, Law, and Violence: Disjunctions of Brazilian Citizenship', in F. Agüero and J. Stark (eds) *Fault Lines of Democracy in Post-Transition Latin America*, pp. 263–96. Miami, FL: University of Miami North-South Center Press.

Paixão, A.L. (1988) 'Crime, Controle Social e Consolidação da Democracia', in F.W. Reis and G. O'Donnell (eds) *A Democracia no Brasil: Dilemas e Perspectivas*, pp. 168–99. São Paulo: Vértice.

Paoli, M.C. (1982) 'Violência e Espaço Civil', in R. DaMatta et al. (eds) *Violência Brasileira*, pp. 45–55. São Paulo: Brasiliense.

Pinheiro, P.S. (1983) 'Violencia sem Controle e Militarização da polícia', *Novos Estudos Cebrap* 2(1): 8–12.

Scheper-Hughes, N. (1992) *Death without Weeping: The Violence of Everyday Life in Brazil*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Zaluar, A. (1985) *A Máquina e a Revolta*. São Paulo: Editora Brasiliense.

Zaluar, A. (2004) *Integração Perversa: Pobreza e Tráfico de Drogas*. Rio de Janeiro: Editora FGV.

James Holston teaches anthropology at the University of California, Berkeley. He is the author of *Insurgent Citizenship: Disjunctions of Democracy and Modernity in Brazil*, recently published by Princeton University Press (2008), *The Modernist City: An Anthropological Critique of Brasília* (University of Chicago Press), and editor of *Cities and Citizenship* (Duke University Press). His current research examines the worldwide insurgence of democratic urban citizenships, their entanglement with entrenched systems of inequality, and their contradiction in violence and misrule of law under political democracy.

Address: Department of Anthropology, University of California, Berkeley, 232 Kroeber Hall, Berkeley, CA 94720–3710, USA. [email: jholston@berkeley.edu]