



Surveillance Cameras in Brazil: exclusion, mobility regulation, and the new meanings of security*

Marta Mourão Kanashiro ¹

Abstract

In Brazil, over the last few decades, projects for the installation of surveillance cameras for security purposes in spaces of public circulation have multiplied. However, the issue has not been specifically studied in the country. Research on surveillance cameras in Brazil has generally focused on cities and security. The debate on urban gentrification or private security has usually included the issue of CCTVs as a built-in element. The analysis presented here, based on data coming from research work carried out between 2002 and 2005, focuses on the installation of surveillance cameras in a public park in the central region of the city of São Paulo (Brazil). A multiplicity of discursive elements circulating in the country is analyzed, following an approach influenced by the work of Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze. Based on this case study, it is possible to notice that cameras actually take part in a process of gentrification and are also related to new knowledge about security and its privatization. Cameras are also analyzed here as a part of the mechanisms of the functioning of power, and their contemporary changes.

Introduction

The power and capability of surveillance and control in contemporary societies has become a crucial theme for social research. In recent years, authors such as Gary T. Marx, David Lyon, Gary Armstrong, Clive Norris, and Stephen Graham (among others) have made fundamental contributions and provided a strong influence for recent theoretical research and case studies (Jones, 2000; Lianos, 2003; Norris, McCahill and Wood, 2004; Monahan, 2006).

In Brazil over the last few decades, projects for the installation of surveillance cameras for security purposes in spaces of public circulation have multiplied. However, the issue has not been specifically studied in the country. Public debate or social movements around surveillance are also absent in this field. Topics of technological surveillance are generally approached in Brazil in works which focus mainly on cities and security (Arantes, 2000; Caldeira, 1992 and 2000; Cubas, 2002; Frugoli, 2001; Sanchez, 2001),

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¹ Cidade Universitária Zeferino Vaz – State University of Campinas (Unicamp). <mailto:mmk@unicamp.br>

linked to the influential contributions of Sharon Zukin (1995) and Mike Davis (1993).

The scenario being such, this study aims at extending the debate, providing at the same time a panoramic view and an analysis of the use of surveillance cameras in the country. The analysis presented here comes from extended research work, carried out between 2002 and 2005², on the installation of surveillance cameras in *Parque da Luz*, a public park in the central region of the city of São Paulo (Brazil). At the time, no other works were known that focused specifically on the installation of surveillance cameras in other Brazilian cities. The research was based on the use of a quite diverse range of sources and data and theoretically influenced by the works of Michel Foucault (1987, 1988, 1994, 2002, 2006). The very idea was to analyze a multiplicity of discursive elements that circulate in Brazil on this topic in order to understand its fluxes and to capture the production of knowledge, meanings, tensions, and practices concerning surveillance cameras.

In the first section, Brazilian legal texts will be analyzed in order to investigate reconfigurations in the regulations and views on surveillance cameras in Brazil. Such reconfigurations will be linked to other sources of data (such as interviews and media) showing the relation between such cameras and private security in Brazil. The changes in the meanings of security will be investigated – in the context of a theoretical framework based on the works of Caldeira (1992 and 2000), Zukin (1995), and Cubas (2002), as well as the tensions in this process, its construction and production, and its circulation, both locally and internationally.

In the second section, the insertion of surveillance cameras in the center of São Paulo will be approached by using the different sources of our field research and referring to a theoretical framework based on some influential studies on gentrification (Davis, 1993; Zukin, 1995; Caldeira, 1992 and 2000; Arantes, 2000; Frugoli, 2001; Sanchez, 2001).³

Most works discussing security, as well as those analyzing urban issues, see surveillance cameras as constitutional elements of the transformations happening in security and urban development. In the third section, it will be suggested that cameras should be looked at as something more than constitutional elements. As evidenced by the work of Michel Foucault, as well as that of Gilles Deleuze (1968, 1986, 1996, and 2000), surveillance cameras can also be seen as technical objects that allow one to think about how power functions today.

Methodological and theoretical approach

The trajectory of the process of installation of surveillance cameras in public spaces in Brazil was analyzed starting from a search of legal texts in each of the three spheres of the

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³ In this work, two different versions were used of Teresa Caldeira's text *City of Walls*. Her dissertation in 1992 was originally written in English, while in 2000, this text was published as a book in Portuguese and English with new data.

Brazilian Legislative Branch: the Federal Senate and Chamber of Deputies, which compose the National Congress (Federal level); the Legislative Assembly of the State of São Paulo (State level); and the Municipal Chamber of the City of São Paulo (local level). The survey was carried out by means of searches on the on-line systems of each institution, taking into account not only laws or legal rules in force, but also bills, their justifications and other kinds of legal texts. All such material will be mentioned here as “legal proposals.” The search was not intended to be fully exhaustive, and it was limited by the structure and characteristics of the databases provided by the institutions. The legal proposals analyzed in this study do not represent the whole corpus of proposals (for example, especially before 2001, not all of these proposals were digitized).

From the theoretical point of view, it is important to stress that, by mapping the legal trajectories of surveillance cameras in Brazil, we did not mean to think by means of a top-down approach, in which the law would represent the starting point for the installation of surveillance cameras in the country. Our theoretical and methodological approach actually followed the definition of power as given by Michel Foucault (1987, 1988, 2002). Foucault (2002) does not analyze power only in its essentially repressive or negative character, or as something only emanating (top-down) from the State, but also in its positivity and in the production of knowledge, practices and techniques. Instead of taking the State as a starting point and verifying its branches into society, Foucault proposes an ascending analysis of power, starting from its infinitesimal mechanisms to verify how they are applied, utilized, or shifted. For these reasons, the following discussion and analysis not only takes into account the analysis of Brazilian legal proposals and legal texts, but it also crosses data coming from interviews with entrepreneurs and vendors of the private and electronic security sector in Brazil, showing that discourses coming from entrepreneurs, policy makers, and the media have some strong points of convergence.

Ten open-ended interviews with entrepreneurs and vendors of the private and electronic security sector were conducted during two different editions of the *Exposec Security Fair*, in 2002 and 2005. Articles coming from magazines of the private security sector, as well as advertisements distributed at the fairs, were also included in the discursive corpus being analyzed. The media’s approaches to the use of cameras were also registered in order to capture one more element in this complex discursive network. Focus was given to news stories and articles published (between 1999 and 2005) in the two largest and most important newspapers in Brazil, *Folha de S. Paulo* and *O Estado de S. Paulo*, both based in São Paulo, but with national circulation.

The fieldwork described in the second section, a case study on the installation of cameras in *Parque da Luz*, was chosen as being a very relevant example of two main issues: the process of social exclusion and gentrification occurring in the central region of São Paulo in recent years, and the growing debate on the topic of surveillance in open spaces for public circulation. The field research was carried out by means of recurrent visits to the location, observing daily life and behavior in the park, together with the analysis of eight open-ended interviews with employees, security guards and citizens who are users of the park. The media’s coverage of the park and official documents of the administration of the parks were also included in the analysis.

Smile, you are being watched: a trajectory of surveillance cameras

The installation of surveillance cameras in public circulation spaces in Brazil began approximately 25 years ago and has been consolidated over the years. Analyzing the corpus of legal texts and proposals collected in our survey, we can find:

- 12 proposals of the Federal Senate, dating between 1982 and 2005;
- 23 proposals of the Chambers of Deputies, dating between 1996 and 2005;
- 19 proposals of Legislative Assembly of the State of São Paulo, dating between 1996 and 2005;
- 8 proposals of the Municipal Chamber of the City of São Paulo, dating between 2001 and 2005.

The vast majority of these 62 texts is about obligation or suggestion of the use of surveillance cameras, though with no clear definitions or rules on the characteristics of the installation of such devices. Only 2 proposals (in 2001 and 2004) were based on the idea of regulating and limiting the scope of cameras. However, they simply support the need for a visible indication of cameras, by means of a written sign saying that the location is under surveillance. Thus, even though they are depicted as an attempt at limiting the scope of surveillance, such proposals do not directly oppose the use of surveillance cameras, nor do they propose a discussion or regulation of such process⁴. As a matter of fact, these legal texts justify the necessity of cameras. Cameras are seen as necessary equipment to provide security, given the inefficiency of the Brazilian State.

Analyzing the corpus of legal proposals, a division into three broad time periods was established, according to the different characteristics of the discourse and its growing incisiveness:

- 1982-1995: “Cameras as a suggestion”
- 1995-2003: Reconfiguration period, “Cameras as an obligation”
- 2003-2005: Second reconfiguration, “Cameras for survival and for international commerce”

In the first period (1982-1995), few legal proposals actually focused on surveillance cameras. They are mentioned for the first time in a legal context (in 1982 and 1983) as possible equipment, among others, for private security systems in banks and other financial establishments. Cameras were only a part of the discussion on security in banks. 1982-1983 also coincides with the transition toward the end of Brazil's military dictatorship (which lasted from 1964 to 1985). It is only after opening up to democracy that discourses on the inefficiency of the State in providing public security, as well as public feelings of fear and insecurity and increasing violence and crime, could become arguments for the use of cameras. In addition to this, between the 1980s and the beginning

⁴ There is not in Brazil a debate on right to privacy. In the legal proposals, privacy, individuality and intimacy are emphasized as rights that should be guaranteed to citizens. However, the proposals simply state that these can be guaranteed by means of signs and clear information. Such topics will not be investigated in this work, which is intended to focus on other, more relevant, relations in the Brazilian scenario.

of the 1990s, economic policies in Brazil were mainly based on protectionism. They were directed at the development of national industry and the solving of problems in the balance of payments. According to the entrepreneurs interviewed for this research, these kinds of policies and/or high taxes for importation motivated the smuggling and illegal commerce of surveillance cameras.

In the second period (1995-2003), the legal proposals regarding surveillance cameras grew in number, intensity, and specificity. Some texts proposed an obligatory use of surveillance cameras in banks. Others even suggested the spread of obligatory use in open and closed spaces of public circulation, such as hospitals, schools, gas stations, soccer stadiums and shopping malls. Most of these proposals justified the relevance of surveillance cameras with arguments coming from fear and insecurity on the part of the population, growing violence and crime, and the inefficiency of State in coping with security. At this time, Brazilians already lived in a democratic regime and the country was also opening importations and reducing or eliminating taxes, market reserves, and import prohibitions for several products. Political and economic changes in the country since the beginning of 1990s, including different cases of privatization of state companies, are linked to the absorption of a “self-regulating” market model which is characteristic of neoliberalism and the globalization process. However, even after liberalization and the lowering of taxes, smuggling of cameras continued in the country.

In this period (1995-2003) both entrepreneurs and the media began to identify a “boom” in electronic security systems, starting in the mid-1990s. Several neighborhood and sales associations, as well as gated communities, installed surveillance cameras in their buildings (but pointing toward the street). Such equipment is controlled by private security companies hired by these groups, or by employees of the gated communities. Sometimes, the associations donate this kind of equipment to the police. In other cases, the public administration hires private security services to install and control the surveillance equipment. It was also in this period that cameras were being used for traffic control in the streets and, in most large Brazilian cities, legal proposals were formulated to permit the use of these same cameras for security purposes as well.

Fairs of the electronic security sector grew more and more. Many different forms of technology were offered on the market, from less advanced ones (such as VHS analog recording systems) to more modern digital ones. Integrated systems began to appear, some with alarms connected to police stations and others in which security guards themselves call the police by phone.

Looking at the reconfiguration from the first to the second period, it can be pointed out that when their presence in the legal scenario became relevant, surveillance cameras had actually already become common in Brazil, especially because of their early illegal entry in the country. The legal proposals made in the second period simply sanctioned a pre-existing situation, broadening the spaces of use for cameras and justifying obligatory use.

Due to the illegality of the acquisitions, it is impossible to date the beginning of the use of cameras in the country with precision. It is also difficult to quantify their presence today;

illegal entry of surveillance cameras in Brazil still occurs, as a means of avoiding taxes⁵. Another important characteristic of this second phase is the influence of the private sector. Private security companies were responsible for most installations of cameras and other electronic devices in this period. Most policy makers involved in the formulation of legal proposals are also entrepreneurs of the security sector, composing what has been called “the security lobby,” as studied by Caldeira (1992, 2000) in the context of crime and segregation in São Paulo. The history of surveillance cameras in Brazil is connected to the history of private security studied by Caldeira.

Both my interviews with entrepreneurs and my analysis of legal texts showed an important characteristic of this second period (1995-2003): a relationship between policy makers and the business sector, characterized by feedback in which pressures of the entrepreneurs stimulate changes in policies and laws toward the obligatory use of this equipment and, on the other hand, new laws and policies stimulating the growth of the security sector and contributing to the increasing strength of such lobbies and pressure groups.

The interplay between legality and illegality of cameras in Brazil also shows that it is not possible to claim that the installation of such equipment happens because of a direct legal imposition by the State. On the other hand, the arguments (made by entrepreneurs and the media) based on increasing crime rates and violence do not alone explain the growth in surveillance cameras in Brazil. According to Caldeira (1992), private security services have expanded considerably in São Paulo. In her opinion, this expansion cannot only be associated with an increase in crime and fear: “On the one hand, the growth of the industry of private security (equipment and services) is a characteristic of Western societies in general and not something specific to São Paulo or even Brazilian society. In various Western countries, security equipment is getting more and more sophisticated and private services are growing considerably, both in quantity and in scope. Private security is nowadays a commodity sold in the market” (Caldeira, 1992: 196).

Caldeira (1992) also shows the growth in the number of private security enterprises and their concentration in the state of São Paulo. According to this author (2000: 199), in 1996 the number of private security enterprises officially registered in the state of São Paulo almost tripled compared to 1991, jumping from 111 to 281 (and 35 training courses on security). Altogether, such companies gave jobs to 100,000 private security guards: almost double the number in 1991, and almost the same number as the number of police in the state (105,000).

Other data, from SESVESP (the Union of Companies of Private Security, Electronic Security, Armed Escort Service and Security Formation Courses of the State of São Paulo), show that the concentration and growth in number of private security companies in the state also continued after 1996. In 2000, there were 323 registered enterprises of the sector; in 2002 there were 410, representing the highest concentration of private security

⁵ According to some entrepreneurs interviewed, estimations from the Brazilian private electronic security sector are in the order of 1 million surveillance cameras installed in the country in 2002. However, this figure takes into account legally installed cameras and an approximate projection of the illegal ones: exact data on the total number of devices do not exist.

companies in Brazil.

Sociologist Viviane Cubas (2002) also detected that private security services in Brazil have expanded more and more in recent years. By looking at the number of permits conceded for the opening of private enterprises, she estimated that between 1982 and 1993 the average number of authorizations was 48 per year. However, in 1994 alone there were 84, and by November of 2000 they jumped to 186. Besides this, according to Cubas, the number of clandestine enterprises is quite high.

Year	N. of permissions conceded in Brazil
1982/93	533
1994	84
1995	54
1996	126
1997	132
1998	130
1999	155
2000	186
Total	1400

Source: SESVESP (2002), in Cubas (2002).

Both the study of legal texts and interviews held with entrepreneurs and vendors of the private electronic security sector showed that, in the second period analyzed (1995-2003), the claim exists that private security services and their electronic equipment respond to the population's needs that are not adequately satisfied by the State.

The growth of violence⁶, the increasing feeling of fear, and the inefficiency of the State to provide public security are all arguments often used, and amplified by the media, to justify and promote the process of growing privatization of security, which in this fashion becomes a highly lucrative commodity. When considering the growth of the private security industry, it is possible to see, through the trajectory of surveillance cameras in Brazil, an association with an implicit broader project for the transformation of security into merchandise.

In this second period in Brazil, discourses about fear and prevention, together with new meanings and knowledge related to security, stimulate the corporations in a process that dislocates security as a role of the State. In this change of meanings, the inefficiency of the State is, at the same time, both an argument for the expansion of the market and a goal to be reached.

During this period, many training and instruction courses were created in Brazil. The four largest private security enterprises in the state of São Paulo, for instance, have their own headquarters to hold instruction courses (Cubas, 2002). Courses of this kind also have

⁶ Of course, the question here is not about denying or proving the growth of violence. It is about trying to analyze different discourses in their functionality and look at what is produced by them.

spread outside these companies, as in the case of the “corporate university of enterprise risk,” of the *Brasiliano & Associados*, a group made up of private security companies that offer consultancy, development of security projects, and training: it is a construction of knowledges and techniques defining what security is.

These “security guard experts” or “consultants,” who transmit the “basic principles of security guard,” are often the sources for newspaper articles and news that teach the population how to protect itself. In this context, security begins to be propagated more as a measure of personal protection, and less with the meaning of public security. Moreover, these same experts also guide the consumer when purchasing private security services. Technicians and specialists are trained to analyze the needs of each consumer and suggest equipment. Our data, coming from interviews with sellers of electronic security services, show that, when surveillance cameras are bought, they come in a package, not only with alarms and electric fences, but also with a whole regime of meanings and knowledge about what security and risks are, as well as what the situations and the characteristics of people that represent danger are.

Such meanings actually circulate internationally, as the circulation of security, seen as merchandise, is growing globally. The interviewed entrepreneurs in Brazil cited international experiences of electronic security systems as examples to be followed. These entrepreneurs state that hardly any equipment is developed or manufactured in Brazil and that most of it is imported and simply assembled in the country. They also add the idea of saturation of this electronic security market in places such as Japan, Europe and North America, pointing to new expanding markets: Brazil, India, China and Russia.

In the third period in which the trajectory of legal proposals of surveillance cameras in Brazil was divided (2003-2005), all the characteristics of the second period continued active, but a reconfiguration happened in the degree of necessity of cameras. In the second period, they were obligatory in banks and other spaces of public circulation. During this third period, they appeared in the legal scenario as obligatory components of security systems in the context of international commerce, personal security, and survival. Although a relation with international discourses about security and electronic equipment was already present in the second period, in this third moment the Brazilian legal discourse began to reflect the North American discourse on security and the combat of terrorism that gained ground after the terrorist attacks on the US World Trade Center and Pentagon in 2001.

However, in this period the use of electronic security systems (including cameras) did not appear only as an example to be followed in Brazil. Above all, it began to be a requirement for international commerce, strengthening the previous situation and reconfiguring the meaning of security by associating it to the idea of survival. For instance, Provisional Measure⁷ n. 184, emitted in 2004 in a so called “urgency regime,” made it possible to detect – in the Brazilian legislation – such consequences coming from the North American discourse of security and combat against terrorism. Law n. 10,935,

⁷ “Provisional Measures” are temporary rules that act as laws. They are issued by the President, but they need Congressional approval to be enacted into law. If Congress does not consider the Provisional Measure within 120 days, it is declared null and void.

derived from this Provisional Measure, gave extraordinary credit to the fiscal investment budget of the Federal Government, in favor of the Department of Justice, Transport and Defense, aiming at the implementation of new security systems in the national ports, as demanded by the International Ship and Port Facilities Security Code (ISPS Code) and by the International Maritime Organization (IMO), of which Brazil is a member. Such requirements respond to North American arguments partially contained in the Bioterrorism Act, which came into effect on December 12, 2003.

Thus, the third moment of the trajectory of installation of surveillance cameras in Brazil is marked by monitoring, by the strengthening of a certain conception of security in the world, and by the adjustment to a model in which security is seen as a necessity for the international market. In the period marked by the war against terrorism, the mechanisms of surveillance, monitoring and control are depicted as essential for survival, multiplying and popularizing them in the country's media as well as in its security fairs.

In other words, the trajectory analyzed here shows that the installation of surveillance cameras in Brazil passed through some reconfigurations of meaning, during which security began to be seen as a commodity and as something to be provided privately. The notion that the acquisition of security must be based on individual concern and initiative began to spread, based on arguments such as the inefficiency of State and growing insecurity, crime, violence, and fear. In this context, security began to be the responsibility of each individual, or of some groups. This scenario corresponds to the period of incorporation of a neoliberal economic and political model. The installation of surveillance cameras became possible and was legitimated by such a scenario of transformations. Security acquired the characteristics of merchandise, being bought and sold in packets, and the growth of violence and fear and the inefficiency of State were all discursive elements activated to promote such characteristics.

Since the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, surveillance cameras have been presented not only as a local solution to security, but as components of systems that are required for international commerce and for the circulation of people. Security equipment has eventually begun to be transmitted in conjunction with the very idea of survival.

Surveillance cameras in the center of the city of São Paulo

To fully comprehend the trajectory of cameras, another complementary approach is also needed. Besides analyzing legal texts and interviewing people connected to the private security sector, a case study in which cameras are seen as part of a process of urban transformation characterized by social exclusion is useful. This is the case of the installation of surveillance cameras in *Parque da Luz* (literally translated, the “park of the light”), in the central region of the city of São Paulo.

Parque da Luz (Fig. 1), delimited by Tiradentes Avenue, Ribeiro de Lima Street, Prates Street and the *Luz* Railroad Station, occupies an area of 100,000 square meters.



Fig. 1: Satellite image of *Parque da Luz*, in S. Paulo. Approximation: 500 feet.
Source: Google Maps 2007

Designed at the end of the 18th century to be a botanical garden, the park was re-inaugurated at the beginning of the 19th century as a public garden. Considered to be the oldest public garden of the city, it was classified as a public heritage in 1981 by the Defense Council of the Historical, Artistic, Archeological and Tourist Heritage (Condephaat). The neighborhood of the railway station and of *Parque da Luz* has been, since the 19th century, a landmark of the city, being related to a modernization project and to the notion of progress. Some authors⁸ have made a historical summary of the region and situate the apex of the region until the end of Second World War, when its decline began – symbolically marked by the fire in the train station in November of 1946 – together with the general decline of railroads in Brazil.

Since then, a progressive change in public and private interests has happened, and investments have concentrated in other regions of the city. In the last 30 years, tenements, street vendors, homeless people, prostitutes and drug users have begun to circulate in the region.

⁸ Athayde (1988), Meyer (1999), Morais (1998)

Today, the region of the station and park is characterized by old residential buildings with cheap rents, commercial buildings and shops specializing in cheap clothing, wholesale commerce, museums, civil and military police headquarters and very cheap hotels. Museums are, in most part, small and not well known, with the exception of the very important State Art Gallery (“Pinacoteca” of the State of São Paulo), located near the Park (Fig. 1).

Since the mid 1990s, new modernization projects for the area of *Luz* and for the city center have begun to be discussed and implemented by the municipality. Such projections and interventions last to this day. In 1999, the central region of São Paulo was incorporated into the “Monumenta Program,” a project for the recovery of Brazilian urban historic heritage. The project, carried out by Iphan (Institute of Historic, Artistic and Cultural Heritage), the Department of Culture and Unesco (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), was funded with resources from the IDB (Inter-American Development Bank) and the Brazilian Federal Government, together with state and city resources.

The proposal of the program for the *Luz* region highlights the partnerships between the public sector, the community, and the private sector, not only for the preservation of the heritage, but also for the promotion of cultural tourism and the transformation of the location into a pole for culture, leisure, and tourism. Private investments were attracted to the region by means of fiscal benefits. Theaters, museums, cinemas, cultural centers and educational institutes are being restored and promoted in the center of São Paulo by means of exhibits, fairs, art workshops, city tours, and sports activities, in addition to other events that claim as their result an apparent promotion of social inclusion and citizenship.

Among many other interventions in the *Luz* neighborhood, measures have been implemented such as the evacuation of buildings, the removal of street vendors, police operations in the Cracolândia⁹ region, and controls in hotels and commercial establishments. The urban movements that fight for housing in the central region of the city describe the lack of housing projects to shelter the banished population, making obligatory the temporary situation of living in shelters. At the same time, the same movements also denounce the closing down of some shelters in the region.

In this context, interventions such as changes in facades, restorations of buildings and sidewalks, improvements in the lighting system, and a new security project including surveillance cameras, are presented as proof of the efficiency and concern of the public and private sector with the demands of the population, giving the actions a praiseworthy, successful and unquestionable character. Thus, culture, nature, plurality, social inclusion, and citizenship begin to make up part of a large advertising project.

Today, cameras monitor several streets in the central region of São Paulo. The municipality is expanding its “Monitoring Program of São Paulo,” aimed at the installation of surveillance cameras. Although the main claim is that the goal of the

⁹ Cracolândia (literally, “the land of crack”) is an area in São Paulo’s downtown region known to be the place where drug users illegally smoke crack.

program is to enforce order, promote the security for the people and the heritage, as well as reduce illegal activities and crime, it is not possible to separate the installation of cameras from an excluding project redirecting the circulation of people.

According to City Hall data, 35 cameras for this program existed in September 2006, monitoring 94 streets in the central region of the city. These cameras are capable of 360-degree rotation and have a reach of more than 1 km. The Metropolitan Civil Guard operates them and analyzes the images. However, they do not represent all the cameras in the central region, since, as already mentioned, much of the equipment is installed on buildings, but with their lenses pointed toward the street and controlled by private security companies.

Four surveillance cameras were installed in *Parque da Luz* in 1999, the same year in which the region entered the “Monumenta Program.” The process was quite complex and turbulent, and its history is outside the scope of this work. However, since that year the park’s situation has remained quite precarious. Problems with roofs and with hydraulic and electric systems are common. Several security enterprises were contracted to operate the cameras and promote the security in the park. However, there were no manifestations of the population against the installation of cameras. In general, the diverse population that frequents the park (from prostitutes to resident families) did not oppose the process.¹⁰ Observing the work of security guards, it was possible to see that they act by observing the images, detecting situations that are inadequate or of potential risk, and eventually calling the police. Such functions can be provided automatically in other security systems. By acting in connection with the electronic security system, the security guards of *Parque da Luz* and the warning signals of the cameras seem to compose an integrated circuit, a machine. The education received by the security guards in their training courses has to teach them how to detect threats before any act. It seems to be a training aimed at the development of a kind of “sensibility,” of constant suspicion.

Surveillance cameras capture gestures and individual movements, but in the eye of the security guard, the situation prevails over the individual. The mass of passers-by, the types and rhythm of their movements, a sudden interruption in their flow, a change in direction are some of the elements observed by security guards. The attitudes of a single person are relevant only when they represent danger or inadequacy, like, for example, in the case of a person who is drunk or drugged, or a beggar lying down on a bench, or a prostitute bothering someone.

Urban revitalization and surveillance cameras

Surveillance cameras are studied, in some works, as a constitutive element of urban revitalization processes, as well as of a model of gentrification. In fact, one can not deny that such equipment is part of those processes. However, it is also possible to stress that they are part of a *device* at the base of the functioning of power today. Widely discussed and debated, the gentrification model of cities focuses on old noble central areas that fell

¹⁰ While this research focused on the period between 1982 and 2005, an exception has appeared more recently: the artistic group “Esqueleto coletivo” that, since 2006, acts in a similar way to the New York group “Surveillance Camera Players.” See: Grupo “Esqueleto Coletivo”: <http://atitude-suspeita.blogspot.com/>, and Surveillance Camera Players: <http://www.notbored.org/scp.html>

into urban blight due to lack of public interest, and that, since the 1990's, began to see new actions and interests on the part of local governments and corporation groups, as part of a new city management model aligned with global capitalism, combining funds from multilateral agencies with the ones coming from the public and private sectors (Frugoli, 2001; Zukin, 1995; Davis, 1993, Arantes, 1993, Sanchez, 2001).

The gentrification of the *Luz* neighborhood does not differ from these urban models characterized by the gentrification process and followed in many cities of the world. Increasing the value of some areas of the city, gentrification modifies the urban landscape, transforms its meanings, and directs circulation and remaining in these places in favor of those specific social segments which are able to consume the products of the city, the city itself becoming now a product (Arantes, 2000) that is managed in a commercial way. This local level of transformations is also articulated with an international agenda for the cities and with the financing of multilateral agencies. Following the ideas of Fernanda Sanchez (2001), who signals the converging interests in selling the cities as the clue of a process that turns space into merchandise, the city can be seen as the product of the development of the world of merchandise, of the realization of capitalism and of the globalization process in its current phase. In the gentrification process, the *Luz* area began to concentrate a great flow of financial capital, people and signs, investments in various sectors such as real estate, culture or commerce. These changes tend to expel from the region all the people who cannot consume such products and who do not represent the modernizing project intended to give the city a new face. What is left for this population are marginalized areas in precarious conditions. For the gentrification of the center, conflicts have to disappear, or, as Arantes (2000) stated, it is necessary "to veil conflicts, to hide the misery." Gentrification forcefully reallocates the population, and access to the re-qualified areas becomes gradually impossible to those who have been expelled.

Security and surveillance in cities have been approached by some authors as two essential elements of the gentrification processes, or of an urban project by private companies to clean the commercial districts (Zukin 1995; Davis, 1993). Davis (1993: 206), analyzing the city of Los Angeles, observes the "militarization of the public space," as well as the "obsession with physical security systems and architectural control of social borders" by means of a trend without precedents toward a fusion between urbanism, architecture and a wide effort of security. The author detects, in this process, arrangements that involve, on the one hand, the occultation of the daily economic violence of the city and, on the other, the definition of certain groups as dangerous.

Both Caldeira (2000) and Zukin (1995) stress the formation of "private armies" of watchmen and guards, which in several countries have become larger than the public police force. According to Zukin, from the standpoint of political economy, this change is a characteristic of privatization processes in general, which encompasses not only security, but also the processes linked to precariousness of work and health, among others. When parts of the city are thought of as belonging only to a part of the population, and destined to be protected by such private armies, the excluded areas and groups depend on the security provided by an eroded public authority that does not protect them. In this way, the attempt of making the conflict disappear is shown in its radicalization, being carried out by means of the disappearance of part of the population. This can be

seen almost as a cheap extermination policy. Davis (1993: 206) verifies the existence of the idea of disposability of certain social groups: in the areas reserved for the excluded groups, a “real curve of ascending violence,” with higher rates of body injuries, is observed.

Looking at this process leads to a more radical retaking of what some authors observed about the proliferation of monitored condominiums and the new way of managing cities by means of the cloistering of a part of society in strengthened enclaves (Caldeira, 2000 and Davis, 1993)¹¹. While agreeing with this portrait of isolation of part of the population by means of a “walled” limit, besides such isolation one can also observe the emergence of an investment (of this same social group) toward the expansion of its own mobility. This is an investment in which immobilization and the disappearance of some social groups happen in favor of the perpetuation of the movement of other social groups¹².

In the Brazilian context, this process is also characterized by yet another element, which can be understood as an aggravating factor: the representation of technology as the ascending path to modernity. For instance, cameras – in the revitalization of the urban centers – are deeply related to processes of exclusion and gentrification that regulate the mobility and circulation of specific social groups. At the same time, the use of this technology gives security a character of apparent modernization, and merges with a “modern” project of city management, leading (in central São Paulo) to space segregation, social discrimination, and places with access restriction.

Thus, the simple installation of technological items in *Parque da Luz* and the center of São Paulo, may bring airs of modernity, even though the security projects maintain and deepen asymmetries and social inequalities. “Modern” security devices, such as surveillance cameras, represent at the local level not only a way to reduce fear and insecurity, but also the feeling of ascension to another development level.

In addition, the “obsolescence system” that guides the market plays a role. The most recent products offered in security fairs always show a “delay”: what one bought last year has already become old. The “newer” maximum of performance of these surveillance devices, the “most modern” technology, is always presented by the market, which in turn operates by running toward a supposedly infinite limit, always signaling a “gap” to be transposed to “become modern.”

The debate about urban gentrification normally includes the issue of the installation of surveillance cameras as a built-in element. However, it is possible to notice from our case study that the cameras actually take part in a process of gentrification, and also that the surveillance practice – when it is made up of new knowledge about security and its privatization – goes beyond mere constitutive elements. In the next section, such changes are analyzed as a part of the mechanisms of the functioning of power.

¹¹ “The strengthened enclaves are privatized, closed, monitored, and designed for housing, leisure, work and consumption.” (Caldeira, 2000: 12).

¹² In this sense, isolation and mobility are not in a relation of opposition, rather they are two aspects of the radicalization of a same process.

The flow as an effect and object of power

Some authors connect surveillance cameras to Foucault's (1987) analysis of the panopticism of Jeremy Bentham, as a way to affirm that, today, people are being watched all the time, without seeing their observer. However, the Brazilian case study analyzed here showed that surveillance cameras do not seem to share many characteristics of the 18th/19th century disciplinary societies analyzed by the French philosopher. When we separate surveillance cameras from the idea of a panopticon, it becomes possible to understand them as part of a current technological politics characterized by "regimes of light and enunciation" (Deleuze, 1996: 84) that are distinctive of our contemporary era.

In the analysis of the role of surveillance cameras, it is important to consider that, if one follows the approach proposed by Foucault (1987, 1988, 2002), the production of knowledge and practices is crucial in order to understand mechanisms and the functioning of power. When analyzed without taking into account Foucault's genealogy, the current devices of monitoring and control seem to have a purely repressive and restrictive character. They appear to introduce a conception of power which is based only on negativity, while Foucault, when focusing on the panopticon, had in mind a kind of an analysis in which the aim was precisely to deconstruct such a point of view.

The installation of surveillance cameras, as observed in this study, does not seem to be related to the correction of deviance by means of a rigorous and repetitive routine of exercises, as was peculiar of a "disciplinary regime." Contemporary use of cameras does not appear to be related to a "normalizing sanction," which was essentially corrective and typical of discipline. Consequently, even though the feeling of being monitored is permanent and incorporated by the subject, and even if the observer still is invisible, the system of penalties historically specific to discipline is no longer active. The surveillance cameras are no longer linked to space or time for "exemplary punishment," but to the permission or refusal of access. In this way, punishment is shifted and diluted to the regulation of mobility, access or circulation.

In the process of urban gentrification described above, the problem of mobility, for example, was more emphasized than that of visibility. Firstly, this is the case because cameras, in relation to urban gentrification or the enrichment of the city center, play the role of making the city a safer place for a specific part of the population. The camera has to inhibit the permanence or the circulation of specific groups in favor of others, thus promoting the regulation of mobility and the disappearance of conflict. In addition to this, as stressed by Monahan (2006), such technology not only regulates the access to spaces and services, but it also facilitates the monitoring and collecting of data: "when technological surveillance is incorporated into spaces and infrastructures, it increases the amount of data available both for social-control functions and capital-accumulation imperatives... as can be seen with police profiling and public-private-sector data sharing, respectively" (Monahan, 2006: 173).

This disappearance of conflict, when analyzed from the point of view of the recent surveillance technologies, means the elimination of deviance, the extermination of error. This context is deeply connected to the movements of capitalism in the present time. By

focusing on the idea that electronic surveillance technologies are only connected to disciplinary mechanisms limits the analysis: regulation of mobility, disappearance of the conflict, production of invisibility by means of the immersion in the flow, production of visibility by means of the representation of inadequacy, are some important effects of surveillance cameras, all of which are connected to other ongoing processes, such as the gentrification of the central region of São Paulo.

The focus of surveillance, therefore, is not the individual, but the flow. And this is nothing more than a flow of information, of bits. For surveillance purposes, what is important is the cadence, the movement, and the mobility of this flow. Thus, in spite of the introjection of the idea of visibility, it is actually the invisibility of the individual¹³ which is promoted in the flow of passers-by. A person's attitudes are only under discussion when he/she does something that stands out from this flow. "Visibility" operates on some specific social types or groups, on characters that have come to represent danger or inadequacy. However, such visibility does not individualize anymore; rather, it signals an error, a deviation from the average flow, that will not necessarily be corrected by a normalizing sanction, as would be the case in a disciplinary society.

It is necessary to focus, as indicated by Gilles Deleuze, on the "newness" (*l'actualité*) of the *device* (*dispositif*). According to Deleuze (1996), the new (*l'actuel*) is not what we are, but what we are becoming¹⁴. To him, visibility is formed of light lines that shape figures which are variable and inseparable from this or that *device*. Prisons, hospitals, and schools were institutions associated with disciplinary power. They composed *devices* that had a certain "regime of light," making certain objects appear or be born, such as the individual. The "newness" of surveillance cameras coincides with a society that is no longer purely disciplinary. It is a society that is part of a new political rationality, acting together with new political technologies, and that seems closer to the "society of control" as described by Deleuze (2000).

According to Foucault (2006: 23), it is not possible to say that the new regimes of power happen in a way to provoke the disappearance of the previous ones, neither that different regimes of power occur as if in a temporal sequence. What actually happens is a refining in the techniques of power and a change in the system of correlation between different mechanisms of power. In this way, some technology of power may make use of several different mechanisms, updating them as part of its own tactics. In short, disciplinary, sovereignty, and control mechanisms may coexist. Observing these complex mechanisms, and the way they are updated or enhanced, is a prolific subject for research, especially in emerging countries marked by deep inequalities.

13 This is about situating the individual as both an object and a subject of disciplinary power (as in Foucault, 1987).

14 "Le nouveau, c'est l'actuel. L'actuel n'est pas ce que nous sommes, mais plutôt ce que nous devenons, ce que nous sommes en train de devenir, c'est-à-dire l'Autre, notre devenir-autre. Dans tout dispositif, il faut distinguer ce que nous sommes (ce que nous ne sommes déjà plus), et ce que nous sommes en train de devenir: la part de l'histoire, et la part de l'actuel. L'histoire, c'est l'archive, le dessin de ce que nous sommes et cessons d'être, tandis que l'actuel est l'ébauche de ce que nous devenons. Si bien que l'histoire ou l'archive, c'est ce qui nous sépare encore de nous-mêmes, tandis que l'actuel est cet Autre avec lequel nous coïncidons déjà." Deleuze (1988).

In the current context of passwords for access, databases, instantaneous communication and continuous control, cameras seem much closer to the society of control proposed by Deleuze than the panopticism of Bentham, or the disciplinary societies. Some possible paths to understanding electronic security technologies in this society are those emphasizing elements such as automation (which dislocates decision and its political character), the investment in the sensation of fear or the redefinition of the concept of security.

The Brazilian context and the inequalities characterizing it signal a coexistence between disciplinary and control elements. The case study on surveillance cameras in the *Luz* region shows an ongoing process of reconfiguration, in which cameras do not as yet have interconnections to databases, for instance, but they already participate in a change: the education of the sensibility of the security guards, who have to act automatically, based on constant suspicion.

With regard to automation and anticipation, Paul Virilio (1996) gives an interesting clue while analyzing these changes in perspective in capitalist societies. He notes that the issue of war can be summarized by the problem of speed. With the possibility of a nuclear attack, and the progressive reduction of the minimum time for its warning, a contraction in time is promoted, and this dislocates the power of reflection and decision in favor of automation. In this configuration, a warning of the attack is no longer needed to prepare defense strategies: anticipation alone is sufficient.

In such a contraction of time, anticipation and prevention emerge as forms of actuation and functioning of power. They are elements that interact by focusing on mobility and circulation. Speed, automation, and the shift from the political character of decision are, once more, characteristics of a society of control.

Concluding remarks

Several works have looked at surveillance cameras as a constitutional element of current transformations both in the field of security and in the debates on urban issues. Starting from these approaches, it was possible to see some characteristics that are common and transversal to both fields and that point to a wider scenario of social, political and economic transformations:

- Security is seen as merchandise, and considered as a measure of personal protection and a responsibility of the individual. On the other hand, a safe, clean and hygienic city is also seen as a good to be sold;
- The inefficacy of the State, both in the field of security and in the debates on urban issues, is presented as an argument for the expansion of private security, for public-private partnerships, and for funding by multilateral agencies. These elements, altogether, manage a new model of city. The connection between these processes is a political and economic model of neoliberalism;
- Discourses about security and about cities circulate locally and internationally, and both are connected to social exclusion.

- “Disappearance” is the way to cope with what is seen as risk or inadequacy;
- There is an “assemblage” (*agencement*, Deleuze, 1968) of feelings of fear and insecurity and the constitution of new knowledge and sensibilities in these universes.

Such elements, axes, characteristics pass through and produce surveillance cameras. They are forms of articulation between processes that are summing up together, complementing and feeding each other, in a symbiotic relationship. These characteristics make cameras possible. They do not only represent the context of cameras in Brazil, but also compose and are incorporated in such equipment, given that this technology hosts and brings about a way of thinking and of production of knowledge and tensions.

In this sense, surveillance cameras are more than a constitutional element in the processes of change of cities and security. Technology incorporates, concentrates and realizes a way of thinking and may represent a privileged point of view to let the visibilities and invisibilities of an epoch emerge. Technologies may function, heuristically, as a starting point for an investigation on the functioning of power today.

The fact that the security guards in *Parque da Luz* are acting as part of this not yet automated system shows that the process is in progress. Both disciplinary and control elements can be identified in this process, especially given that technologies and arrangements of different range co-exist in Brazil. Some technologies deal with flow as an effect and an object: for instance, when cameras are connected to a database. This is not a purely technical difference because, incorporated in the automation of the technological system, there is also a shift from the political character of the decision about what danger and risk are.

The operational system in Brazil today is marked by the kind of tensions, discourses, practices and knowledge discussed above. These are the visibilities and invisibilities of an era in which “control” is this “other with which we already coincide,” and in which “disciplined” is what we are ceasing to be (Deleuze, 1996: 93). Different mechanisms co-exist and are correlated, but they now work within new tactics.

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