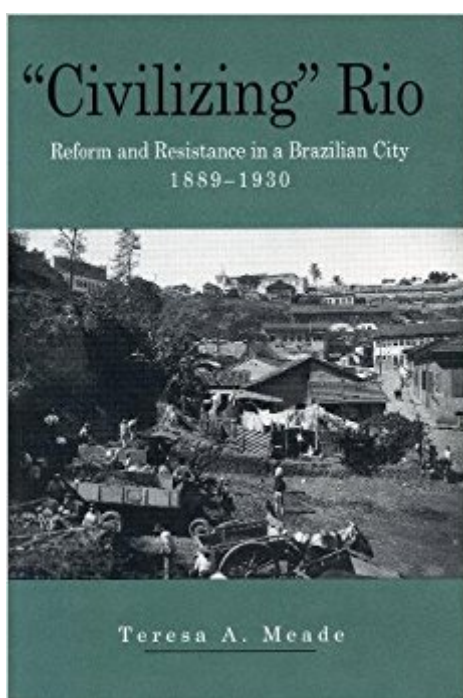


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# "Civilizing" Rio: Reform And Resistance In A Brazilian City, 1889-1930



## Synopsis

A massive urban renewal and public-health campaign in the first decades of the nineteenth century transformed Brazil's capital into a showcase of European architecture and public works. The renovation of Rio, or 'civilization' campaign, as the government called it, widened streets, modernized the port, and improved sanitation, lighting, and public transportation. These changes made life worse, not better, for the majority of the city's residents, however; the laboring poor could no longer afford to live in the downtown, and the public-health plan did not extend to the peripheral areas where they were being forced to move. Their resistance is the focus of Teresa Meade's study. Meade details how Rio grew according to the requirements of international capital, which financed, planned, and oversaw the renewal-and how local movements resisted these powerful, distant forces. She also traces the popular rebellion that continued for more than twenty years after the renovation ended in 1909, illustrating that community protests are the major characteristic of political life in the modern era.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

'Civilizing' Rio is a concise, well-written social history that will be invaluable to anyone conducting an examination of the modern urban environment's evolution. Professor Meade utilizes Manuel Castels's 'theory of collective consumption' to examine Rio de Janeiro's growth and development. She effectively argues that the allocation of urban space and its amenities are not accidental, but planned in a manner that purposely separates the rich from the poor. . . . 'Civilizing' Rio will be of great appeal to all who are interested in Latin American urban and social history. It also serves as a

foundation upon which other comparative analyses of developing cities can be examined. It is unfortunate that the book will likely be ignored by the architects and planners who are responsible for the design of today's cities. --Sam Amado, *Hispanic American Historical Review*

Using an impressive array of Brazilian primary and secondary sources and placing her study within a larger theoretical context on the causes of urban violence, Meade shows that Rio's development, like that of many metropolises in the developing world . . . was planned. . . . An excellent resource for those interested in Brazil and Rio de Janeiro during the Old Republic, and urban violence in general. --W. M. Weis, *Choice*

Meade takes a refreshing and provocative perspective that offers substantial rewards to students of urban movements in general. . . . 'Civilizing' Rio should provoke a rethinking of urban politics and movements. --Steven Topik, *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*

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Teresa A. Meade is Associate Professor of History at Union College in Schenectady, New York. She is co-editor, with Mark Walker, of *Science, Medicine, and Cultural Imperialism* (St. Martin, 1991).

Very pretty and not difficult to work with at all. It does a good job. Nice. could not be more pleased! it actually works...was soo impressed by it take the chance and watch with amazement! This is the best one I ever bought. Strongly recommend.

This book provides both a useful overview of urban social history in turn-of-the-century Rio de Janeiro and a unique and convincing analysis of how poor urban and suburban residents responded to urban renewal projects. The author places her analysis in an engaging, accessible, and accurate narrative of the city's broader history, weaving together the findings of a broad array of specialized secondary works. Her own primary research on popular protests provides a crucial part of this history, and her conclusions are suggestive of how popular movements might be understood elsewhere as well. The book shows that the effects of undemocratic urban administration can be

disasterous for the least powerful sectors of the population. Yet it also shows that the urban poor were by no means "marginalized," nor did they decline to participate in orderly, legal forms of protest. Riots and violence exploded in Rio only after poor residents had tolerated arbitrary and violent government implementation of urban policies, and after they had found other avenues of appeal to government officials closed. This book is effective in undergraduate and graduate courses alike. In addition to providing an excellent overview of Rio's early twentieth-century history, the book stimulates students to think critically about urbanization, class conflict, forms of protest, and the peculiar concerns of non-industrial nations to create images of order and civilization in the early twentieth century.

This is a major addition to the social history of urban life in Brazil, and Latin America generally. By shifting the emphasis from workplace struggles to conflict over urban space, Meade allows us to rethink dramatic and sometimes puzzling episodes of popular protest in turn-of-the-century Rio de Janeiro (such as the revolt against compulsory smallpox vaccination). Her argument that these protests should be seen as part of the contest over capitalist modernization, and are no less "modern" than workplace struggles in nearby Sao Paulo, adds to the ongoing discussion of political consciousness as forming in struggles both within and beyond the point of production. Meade also explores the implications of "urban beautification" for the popular classes in a way that connects processes in Rio with broader global tendencies during the Age of Imperialism. Finally, the book is highly readable and accessible to the non-specialist, and can be used in courses ranging from introductory undergraduate surveys to graduate seminars.

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