

Free Riding Rio: Protest, Public Transport and the Politics of a Footboard

Laura Kemmer

Center for Metropolitan Studies, Technische Universität Berlin

Abstract

This article explores the political quality of relations between residents and urban materiality. Against a background of mass protests against transit fare increases in major Brazilian cities, and the violent infrastructural transformations of post-Olympic Rio de Janeiro, I show how the four-year suspension of a central city tramline has led to the emergence of new forms of urban collectivity. My case study concentrates on the tramway's function as "free riding" device, which allows residents to jump on and off the footboard without having to pay for the journey. I draw on filmed accounts of footboard-riding to examine how embodied relations to urban matter have induced claims for alternative ways of organizing public transport and access to the city. By combining approaches to assemblage, micropolitics and affect, I argue that residents' attachments to the tramway and its latest technological changes generate ambiguous political mobilizations, ranging from revolutionary to reactionary. [Rio de Janeiro; Micropolitics; Affect; Collectivity; Infrastructure; Materiality]

Introduction

The "Olympic Games of Santa Teresa" were celebrated in May 2015 in a central hilltop neighborhood of Rio de Janeiro. While the official sporting venues of the city were still under construction for the upcoming mega-event of 2016, a group of activists transformed Santa Teresa into an Olympic Park of its own. A hurdler jumped fences alongside a construction pit, workers paused their sand shoveling to applaud the long jump, and the uncovered tracks that were piled up at the side of the street served as a race-walking circuit. The scenes were part of a short video, released by the local group of the Brazilian Mídia Ninja movement on their YouTube channel.¹ After years and years of hard work, the featured reporter announced, a marvelous sporting complex was about to replace the ordinary tramway that once ran through the neighborhood's streets. The construction work that the media activist ironically referred to had indeed been ongoing for years, and the playful intervention of the Ninja-group was just one of many protest actions against the suspension of the historic railway system of Santa Teresa. After a brake failure in 2011, the oldest electric tramway of South America had literally lost the track on its way downhill, and despite official declarations that the system would be modernized and re-installed, it has still not fully returned.

At first, the appearance of the organized activists seemed to indicate a connection between the local struggle and broader controversies about access to public transport in contemporary Brazil. The Ninja network of left-wing media makers had gained international recognition for their alternative coverage of the 2013 mass protests that initiated from demonstrations against fare rises and soon spread from São Paulo to the country's other major cities. The Movimento Passe Livre (Free Fare Movement), one of the main mobilizers during the protests, has been portrayed by critical scholars—from David Harvey, over Ermínia Maricato and Raquel Rolnik, to Slavoj Žižek—as an important new actor confronting the capitalist logic that governs public transport in urban Brazil (Maricato et al. 2013). Confirming such perspectives, many analysts argue that the scope of the free-fare movements' claims could broaden quickly toward a critique of mega-event related investments and the financialization of urban space, because transport justice was inseparably related to the legacy of spatial segregation between predominantly white, upper middle class districts and those areas inhabited by the poor, mainly black residents of Brazilian cities (Cava and Cocco 2014; Purdy 2017; Saad-Filho 2013).²

Although the exclusionary mechanisms of Brazilian public transport politics are certainly being reproduced in Santa Teresa, where the tramway reinstallation was accompanied by propositions for fare-rises and financial speculations of all kinds, the local struggle occasionally escapes the logic of larger structural formations of class, race, and socio-economic inequality. This article is driven by the question of how to account for the political mobilization around the tramway in light of the rather volatile alliances between the neighborhood's ascendant middle class, its *favela* inhabitants, and organized activists; the spontaneous formation of political demands; and the unprecedentedly strong attachments of residents to specific material elements of a transport infrastructure.³

What makes Santa Teresa a case for developing a complementary perspective to the explanations on transport struggles as provided by, for instance, economic or technocratic readings, is how the neighborhood maintains its position as strangely in-between Rio de Janeiro's recently upgraded downtown and port areas, the richer southern districts, and the predominantly poor northern and western peripheries. The residents who appear throughout this article represent the variegated population that makes Santa Teresa neither simply a bourgeois district nor entirely a *favela*. These people of different socioeconomic backgrounds, professions, and livelihoods are part of a core group of nine interlocutors, which I accompanied between 2015 and 2019 as part of my larger project on the relationship between public transport infrastructure and the emergence of new forms of urban collectivity (Kemmer 2019). Be it as long-time tramway activist or as *favela*-resident, as graffiti writer or as tram-driver, as shop-owner or as street vendor, the nine residents have acted as points of convergence for the disparate parts of the neighborhood, where information was exchanged and spontaneous forms of protest emerged. In the

following, I draw from fieldnotes, video interviews, and ethnographic conversations to show how the tramway did not only become an “object” of struggles for transport justice, but how the peculiar relations between residents and the transport infrastructure’s single material components have generated political mobilizations that point beyond the explanatory scope of structuralist analyses.

The next section introduces the theoretical framework of this article, which draws from approaches to assemblage, micropolitics, and affect to substantiate an understanding of urban transport politics as socio-material coproduction. The second section moves forward to consider how the material peculiarities—especially the footboard—of the century-old tramway have enabled alternative, subversive uses of Rio’s transit vehicles. The third section considers how the tramway’s “affective heritage” has become ingrained in the collective subconscious of Santa Teresa residents, thus mobilizing political claims that challenge the ways public transport is organized along a capitalist logic in contemporary Brazil. The paper ends with a reminder of how the uncontrollable affects resulting from the interplay of residents and infrastructural materiality can have not only revolutionary, but also reactionary effects.

Transport Politics, Urban Inequality, and Material Resistance

This article relates to ongoing debates in urban anthropology and mobility studies in order to argue that an explanatory framework for the tramway-protests in Rio de Janeiro that draws from the structural context of unequal access to public transport needs to be complemented by a consideration of infrastructural elements as “political matter.” The particular relations between residents and urban materiality in Santa Teresa neighborhood, I will show, have induced new forms of political collectivity and claims for alternative ways of organizing access to the city.

As argued above, at first sight it seems plausible that the tramway of Santa Teresa became a political “matter” of protest in reaction to Rio’s increasingly exclusionary organization of public transport. The city’s public transport network is indeed often cited as one of the most expensive in the world, especially for lower-income classes (Pereira et al. 2017: 5). Within a period of six years, beginning January 2013, Rio’s public transport users have faced a fare increase of 45% (RJ Gov 2019). As a study from 2017 already shows, the poorest ten percent of Rio’s population spends 43% of their earnings on daily commute, whereas the wealthiest decile needs to afford only 4% of their income for transport (Pereira et al. 2017: 6). While local fare politics are clearly prejudiced against favela residents, their mobility has been further restricted after a “rationalization” policy for Rio’s public transport system was approved with

The city’s public transport network is indeed often cited as one of the most expensive in the world ...

the Olympic bid. Since 2016, this policy has led to the shutdown of 90 bus lines that connected Rio's poor northern and western peripheries to the richer central and southern districts (Rodrigues 2018). High bus fares and limited service has a profound impact in Rio, in particular since urban railway lines were largely destroyed during the military dictatorship from 1964 to 1985. Today, busses carry five times more passengers than the metro system, thus accounting for 77% of the journeys made in the metropolitan area (Rodrigues and Bastos 2016, 42). The Santa Teresa tramway was indeed the only means of transport in Rio that never adopted tariff increases. Since its inauguration in the late 19th century (Morrison 1989, 17), the tram had kept its cheap ticket price of 0.60 R\$ until 2011, well below the city's average fare of 2.50 R\$ at that time.

Did political claims emerge around the tram because it stood for the possibility of affordable transport fares and thus had to be defended to guarantee that this possibility was kept alive? The story of Adriene, a former president of a local neighborhood association and veteran in the tramway struggle, presents an alternative explanation:

The tram has survived not because of protests. Of course, there have always been residents who acted in its favor. Actually, we [the members of the neighborhood association] have a history of fighting for the system's preservation since the 1980s. But the real reason for its survival is *material resistance* [resistência material]. The first electrified tramways were built with an especially flexible chassis, so that they could pass the curves of Santa Teresa. You could hear their rattling and creaking [rangido e chocalho] all over the neighborhood. And because the tram had to pass over an aqueduct, it was built with a particularly narrow track gauge. For a long time, then, busses had no chance to replace it. So when residents started protesting, this was not because of cheap prices; it was as if its [the tramway's] resistance was contagious [foi contagiante]; we could not do otherwise than defend it. (Interview, September 10, 2015, emphasis added)⁴

Instead of confirming the assumption that the tramway's ticket price had turned it into a political issue, Adriene argued that its very materiality, that is, the properties, qualities, and design of specific elements that compose the vehicle, were the "real reason" behind the local struggle. "Resistance," in this case, did not refer to a people's movement against state authority. Rather, it pointed to the durability or permanence of the tramway. Its track gauge and chassis had been so perfectly adjusted to the steep streets and narrow curves of the hilltop neighborhood that the tram resisted replacement by the bigger busses that had taken over the rest of the city between the mid-1960s and 1970s. Following this version of the story, the interplay of non-human elements, such as the neighborhood's peculiar topography and the vehicle design, were the original reason for why the tram had survived for over 120 years.⁵ From Adriene's perspective, it was as if the physical resistance of the tramway had been passed on to the residents of Santa Teresa, who "could not do otherwise than defend it." For her, the tramway itself inspired the political mobilization

of residents against its suspension in the first place, and only later did the debate on ticket fares and access to public transport in urban Brazil become part of the struggle.

The two stories of the tramway struggle, the “context-” versus the “resident-” version, seem to demand answers to the question of why, how, and when the tramway became political. Such juxtaposition echoes an ongoing debate across disciplines in urban studies.⁶ Ever since Colin McFarlane defended assemblage urbanists’ ability to “think politically” (McFarlane 2011, 204), critical Marxist scholars have settled into a position that warns against “focus[ing] on the materials themselves” too narrowly without “consider[ing] the political-economic structures and institutions in which they are embedded” (Brenner, Madden, and Wachsmuth 2011, 234). Concerning the case discussed in this article, the debate would thus require asking whether it was the growing exclusions in public transport across Rio or the material resistance of the tramway itself that had transformed it into a political matter? For this article, though, I suggest a rephrasing of the question. Rather than suggesting a hierarchy between “structural context” and “material resistance,” or speculating on causalities in either one direction, I align with the editors of this issue, who suggest understanding urban politics as a socio-material coproduction (Pilo’ and Jaffe, 2020). Following from this, I make two related arguments.

First, for my analysis of emerging forms of political collectivity around the tramway, I draw from works that foreground cities’ “associative ability,” and which understand them as loosely-configured groupings of residents, things, affects, and places that might stabilize into everything between provisional collaborations and social movements (Amin and Thrift 2002: 27; 2016: 129; Frichot et al. 2016). Here, I adopt an assemblage perspective on the urban (Fariás 2010; McFarlane 2011) to account for the collective agency of all different elements involved, human and nonhuman, that is, their joint capacity to “call the existing system... into question” (Färber and Otto 2016: 26). Working with assemblage allows for studying the mutually defining relationship between residents’ struggles on the one hand and the material capacities and limitations of the tram vehicles on the other hand. Structural contexts that lead to a growing spatial exclusion through public transport in Rio are then not taken as unique explanations, but rather, emphasis is put on their emergence out of the relations between residents and specific instances of urban matter (Färber 2014, 133).

Second, I combine the assemblage perspective on collective agency with affect theoretical approaches in order to study how this agency emerges from the quality of the relations between humans and matter. I am trying here to find out more about why the tramway’s “material resistance” became contagious, or, in other words, how exactly the attachments of residents to the tramway have translated into political claims and alliances. While it has been convincingly argued that the unconscious perceptions and sensory experiences that fill an interstitial space

*Working with
assemblage
allows for
studying the
mutually
defining
relationship
between res-
idents’ strug-
gles on the
one hand and
the material
capacities and
limitations
of the tram
vehicles on the
other hand*

between humans and non-humans bear “a reservoir of political potential” (Massumi and McKim 2009: 189), I do align with those authors who remind us that not all such “micropolitical” flourishings necessarily incite a revolution (cf. Anderson 2017). Through a more nuanced reflection on the (micro-)politics of affect (Himada and Manning 2009; Jellis and Gerlach 2017) and its repercussion in mobility studies (Bissell 2016; Merriman 2019) in the final sections of this article, I show how affective relations to the latest technological changes of the tramway can play out in reactionary positions as well.

The Affective Heritage of a Footboard

If we follow an understanding of urban politics as socio-material coproduction, as proposed by the editors of this special issue, then what are the specific instances of infrastructural matter that have provoked a local struggle for transport justice in Rio de Janeiro? In this article, I show how residents’ attachment to a single material element of the tramway, namely its footboard, has been central to the emergence of political claims for alternative ways of organizing access to the city.

Rio de Janeiro’s urban rail infrastructure has been imbued with political meaning from its beginnings. When installed at the turn of the 20th century, the first electrified tramways played a decisive role in one of the biggest urban interventions in the city’s history. Francisco de Pereira Passos, a trained railway engineer, had just returned from his studies in France when he was appointed mayor of the then-Brazilian capital in 1902. Inspired by Baron de Haussmann’s large-scale renewal of Paris, Passos took the disease-ridden central and port areas of Rio as the starting point for a radical “revitalization” of the city, a process that became known as the *Bota Abaixo* (knock-it-down) policy (Benchimol 1953, 235–39). The construction of new tramlines contributed to the displacement of thousands of people from these densely populated areas (Weid 1994). As the rail network required extra space in the streets, it paved the way for the construction of large boulevards and the subsequent destruction of traditional housing structures and other forms of social organization of the urban poor.⁷

The promises of modernization and economic upturn made by the city government attracted a series of foreign investments in the growing tramway business during the first decades of the 20th century. Against this background, it is no coincidence that the companies that operated the early tramways of Rio were simultaneously active in the real estate sector. The first urban areas to be connected by public transport often included terrains that had previously been acquired by these companies (Pires 2014). Consequently, the tramway of Santa Teresa became profitable at a time when upper-middle class families and workers alike began to leave the city center in reaction to Passos’ revitalization policy. In addition to shaping the exodus of populations up the hills and

further into Rio's growing periphery, the foreign companies also brought with them the artifact that gave birth to the name "bonde." This specifically Brazilian name for tramway derives from the English word "bond," which was printed on top of the first tickets issued by the US-American Botanical Garden Railroad company around 1890 (Weid 1994, 9).

Ironically, the only means of transport that was named *after* the tickets issued by the tramway companies soon became the only means of transport in Rio that could be used *without* a ticket. Passengers' alternative ways of accessing the trams were fundamentally influenced by their very material form. From the early 20th century onwards, the vehicles maintained a remarkably uniform design as a result of the growing cooperation between the tramway companies in sharing vehicle stock and electricity supply (Benchimol 1953, 260). Mainly due to climatic considerations, all models were open at the side, with the effect that passengers were able to get on and off the carriages at any point during the relatively slow ride (Figure 1). The footboard, which covered the entire side of the vehicle and which had originally been installed as access assistance, facilitated this openness from the beginning: passengers who managed to jump on the footboard would not have to pay for the journey. They were "free riding" the tramway, so to speak.

In Rio, the tramway's material peculiarities have been central to the formation of spaces and political subjectivities. As I have argued above, the introduction of the first tramlines needs to be understood in light of a political trend set forth most prominently by Haussmann in Paris. His



Figure 1. "Nem tudo na vida é passageiro"—Not everything in life is transient (passenger). Picture courtesy of ©Leila Viany. [This figure appears in color in the online issue.]

political conduct inspired the tram-enthusiast Pereira Passos to use the new rail infrastructure to facilitate both the commodification of land, housing, and transport and the (re-)import of a “colonial,” socio-spatial logic of center and periphery (Goonewardena and Kipfer 2007, 33; see also Harvey 2008, 26). On the one hand, the legacy of such logics can still be seen today, and, as I have argued in the previous section, busses have become the new “objects” of a transport policy that reproduces the segregation between northern and western peripheries and central and southern districts. On the other hand, the trajectory of the tramway shows how specific instances of urban matter have not only reinforced urban inequality, but in turn have also been appropriated for alternative, subversive uses of public transport. The tramway, in other words, has shaped urban politics in Rio in a quite different way than envisioned by public authorities.

The everyday uses of (public) transport, beyond the “formal” system installed by city governors, have become a vibrant field of study for urban anthropologists (Evans et al. 2018; Kinfu and Mains 2017; Lee 2015; Sopranzetti 2014; Truitt 2008). A decade ago, Allison Truitt argued that discussions that reduce the specific material “agents” of a transport infrastructure to mere “sign vehicles” remain necessarily incomplete (2008: 4, 15). From her study of motorcycle mobility in urban Vietnam, Truitt shows how modes of social organization, of transport regulation, and of class formation are constantly renegotiated as people enter into traffic and become sensually related to vehicles, helmets, side mirrors, and other material elements of these everyday mobility infrastructures. Similarly, in Rio, the bodily relation to the tramway through footboard-riding over time evolved into a use of transport that subverted capitalist fare models. However, as Doreen Lee reminds us, the sensuous pleasure of “alternative mobilities” often come at the expense of bodily exposure of drivers and passengers alike (2015: 246). This exposure has particular implications for footboard-riding, too, as I will discuss later on.

With more explicit focus on political mobilization, scholars like Claudio Sopranzetti (2014) and Eshetayehu Kinfu and Daniel Mains (2017) have studied the protests of motorcycle taxi drivers in Bangkok, Thailand, and Awasa, Ethiopia, respectively. While the ability of the Bangkok drivers to mobilize for larger protests against the Thai government is reminiscent of the trajectory of the Brazilian Free-Fare Movement, the case of the driver’s strike in Awasa provides interesting parallels specifically with Rio’s tramway protests. As Kinfu and Mains outline, because Ethiopia’s Bajaj (motorcycle taxis) are built smaller than its urban minibuses, they can operate within shorter intervals and, notably, they can pick up and drop off passengers wherever needed (2017: 266). Resonating with these findings, my study foregrounds particular material characteristics of the tramway as decisive for its “resistance” against replacement by busses and for enabling alternative uses of transport. In Rio, the peculiar design of the tramways made it possible for the early footboard-riders to experience how the organization of traffic

*the bodily
relation to
the tram-
way through
footboard-rid-
ing over
time evolved
into a use of
transport that
subverted
capitalist fare
models*

systems along fixed stations and limited to ticket-holders was neither stable nor unquestionable.

From this human-material relation emerged a political subjectivity which continues to resonate in 21st-century Rio. Since the suspension of the city's last tramway in 2011, protest has surfaced in various forms around the Santa Teresa neighborhood. Residents have organized regular protest marches to claim the tramway's return; they have transformed bare rail sections into vegetable gardens, swimming pools, and playgrounds; and they have covered the neighborhood walls with graffiti writings, paste-ups (*lambe-lambe*), and murals that deal with the loss of this particular transport vehicle. In many ways, the Santa Teresa protest echoes what Brazilian scholars early on identified as new modes of residents' intervention into mega-cities like São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro (Bentes 2009, 2011; Caldeira 2012; Telles 2006; Tiburi 2011; Vianna 1988). As Teresa Caldeira has rightly observed from her work in early 21st century São Paulo, acts of "imprinting" the city walls with cryptic, allegedly violent messages and of "moving around" these walls in ways that disrespect the rules of traffic and other urban frontiers, differ considerably from the integrative claims and repertoires of urban social movements during Brazilian democratization in the 1980s (2012: 416). Arguably, these and similar new political idioms of non-integration and dissensus will become important means for resistance against the country's current far-right rulers, who have made more apparent than ever that a harmonious conviviality of black and white, poor and rich in Brazil is nothing more than a myth (Guimarães 2006, Ribeiro 2019).

In Santa Teresa, the practices that Caldeira describes reverberate and mix in unexpected ways. The suspension of the tramway in 2011 marked the beginning of the end of alternative ways of "moving around" the neighborhood, in this case by either ignoring stations or ticket obligations. In the years that have followed, residents have "imprinted" the presence of the footboard on the walls of Santa Teresa. They have written, pasted, and painted it on all kinds of surfaces, lampposts, junction boxes, and bus schedules. The frequently written claim "tramway with footboard for all" has been rendered with a series of paste-ups visualizing joyful footboard-riders—and a renowned local artist even attached an original side-handle to his hyperrealist tramway-mural, thus allowing passers-by to reenact the experience of "jumping on." In conversations with the authors of these works, I found that the political claim to "get the footboard back" (interview with Jambeiro, March 21, 2016) was accompanied by a desire "to remember" (interview with Ana, November 5, 2015) this single material element of the tramway in yet another way. In this sense, the following stencil that appeared in at least ten places in various sections of the main street between 2015 and 2016 gains a new meaning (Figure 2).

"The footboard is the immaterial, cultural, affective heritage of the people of Santa Teresa," the writing translates.⁸ Renata and her friend Marcelo, two students in their thirties, came up with this stencil while



Figure 2. A footboard message. Photo by author. [This figure appears in color in the online issue.]

they were talking about the transformations of Santa Teresa in the run-up to the Olympic Summer Games in Rio de Janeiro. When I interviewed them, we sat at the border of a vegetable patch that the two had just completed as part of a local “community gardening” project in one of the neighborhood’s favelas. As Marcelo put it, the two of them had always engaged (*envolvidos*) with their surroundings, and the vegetables were just one expression of this (interview, May 21, 2016). Both had been founding members of a local “right to the city” group that organized residents’ meetings around issues like access to water, food, health, and mobility in very different parts of the city between 2015 and 2016, and both continue to be active in different opposition movements against the current government. However, Renata argued, the writing had not been motivated by their individual engagement. Rather, both had perceived a particular tense atmosphere “suffocating” the city ever since the political and financial crisis of 2013. For Marcelo, the stencil was a way of “letting out” some of the pressure he felt on the streets and in his day-to-day dealings with rising rents and transport fares. This was especially important, Renata added, because it seemed that the hopes of the 2013 protesters were lost by now:

It was as if everybody was discouraged [*desanimou*]. In 2013, new promises emerged [*surgiram*], of free transport, of participation, access to the city...and this is where it stayed. At least so it seems. But actually, many things were going on in Santa [Teresa]. Hitchhiking [*pedir carona*] was something everybody remembered. It had made the tramway a mobile meeting place [*ponto de encontro móvel*], because you could jump on anytime during the ride, and everywhere, from the favelas to the other parts, so very different people were meeting during the ride. So we did the stencil because we wanted to show that there is something going on here. (Interview, May 21, 2016)

In a certain way, it seemed as if the 2013 promises of “moving around” the city differently had lived on in Santa Teresa through the “imprinted”

memories of the tramway. From an assemblage perspective, it could be argued that the footboard articulated a specific, material agency; it made others act on behalf of its preservation, and it seemed to hold together the neighborhood's different residents and claims. Through its particular material properties and design, it allowed for residents to jump on during the ride, thus pointing to the possibility of a means of transport that functioned outside fixed stations and schedules. For Renata, it was especially this function of the tramway as "meeting place" that set the stage for the "many things going on." It is in this sense that the stencil that remembered the footboard as *affective heritage* prompted me to zoom in, literally, on the relationship between residents and footboard.

Swinging - Balançar: The Politics of Movement

In December 2015, more than four years after the suspension of the tramway, I conducted a series of interviews with residents of Santa Teresa, accompanied by a documentary filmmaker. This section concentrates on two of these video-interviews, with shop-owner Dario and local artisan Paulo, as they provide a particularly strong evidence for how the bodily experience of tramway riding has had political effects. To situate these conversations within the local context, let me first introduce two situations where the "in-betweens" of residents and infrastructural materiality have generated new alliances and claims for alternative mobilities in the neighborhood.

Both situations evolve around the figure of the hitchhiker, or free rider, who jumps on the tramway's footboard to avoid a ticket fare. When Renata, the author of the stencil that figured the footboard as "affective heritage," told me that hitchhiking was an experience that everybody from the neighborhood remembered, she did not mean this as a kind of "frozen image" (*imagem congelada*), as something from the past that could be displayed from time to time. Rather, as Renata specified later in our conversations, the particular local way of tramway riding had to be "enacted" every time anew in residents' encounters. "This is about the small gestures we share, the emotions we have passed through, from joy over sadness to anger," she told me, "and everybody feels different, is differently *moved* of course" (emphasis added). Throughout my fieldwork, I have indeed encountered very different ways of relating bodily and emotionally to the tramway. Many of my conversation partners burst out into spontaneous laughter, their arms wide spread and eyes closed when they recalled the joy of standing on the footboard, the feeling of speed and wind, the shouting and waving to people on the sidewalks. Others have buried their faces in their hands, or just looked at each other and shrug their shoulders in resignation, sharing a sadness for something irrevocably lost, and little hope that it would ever return. Taken together, these bodily and emotional expressions suggest that over time, tramway riding

has evolved into a shared sensory memory that transcends individual experiences in the neighborhood.

Confirming this perspective is that despite the diverse expressions of *being moved* by their tramway memories, residents have *mobilized* with an astonishing unanimity whenever something appeared to threaten their particular embodied relations to the tram. In 2009, such a threat manifested in the form of the so-called “Frankensteins,” a mish-mash tram type of old vehicles and new technology, introduced by the city government as a “modernization” initiative for the historical tramway network of Santa Teresa. The name Frankenstein, as Adriene told me, had been invented by the residents because the new models were indeed a composite of different pieces grafted together from “tramway cadavers” of decommissioned rolling stock and “reanimated” by the use of modern technologies (interview with Adriene, September 10, 2015).⁹ However, what made them appear as threatening “monsters” was not so much what they looked like, but how they *felt different* during the ride: “They moved too smoothly, they glided through the streets” (ibid.). A recurrent trope I noted in residents’ accounts of why they rejected the Frankensteins was that they missed the squeaking and jolting of the traditional tramways, the balancing from one foot to another during the ride, the tilting of torsos right and left accompanying the inclinations of the trailer, and the constant preparedness of hands to clinch on to anything that would provide stability against its jerky movements.

“And now you could ask ‘why didn’t you content with finally having a pleasurable ride, no shaking and rattling anymore?’” (ibid.). Adriene looked at me daringly. What she would reveal to me in a second was that residents had been right in distrusting the Frankensteins. Soon after they had begun operating, the new models had to be withdrawn again. “Their chassis and suspension might have been built for smooth movements, but they were not flexible enough for the neighborhoods’ ups and downs” (interview with Luis, August 15, 2018), a former tram driver explained to me. The story of “material resistance” that Adriene had told me before resurged through these accounts. Through an interplay of non-human elements, of tram trailer with topography, of chassis and suspension with narrow curves and steep streets, the tramway had ultimately resisted being replaced by its modernized, “Frankenstein” version. Complementing Adriene’s story, however, this situation also points to *how* the affective attachments of residents to infrastructural matter have translated into political claims and alliances. Because their sensory memories of tram riding did not fit with the new models, a heterogeneous group of residents had been mobilized in defense of the historic vehicles.

Material resistance, then, emerged from a combination of the specific properties, qualities, and design of the tramway, and the local, embodied knowledge of how a ride should feel. Without the spontaneous residents’ mobilization of that time, Adriene believes, the failures of the new models would have been concealed until a serious accident would have happened. “This was a special moment, from the Prazeres [a local favela] to

*the affective
attachments
of residents
to infra-
structural
matter have
translated
into political
claims and
alliances*

the Curvelo [a central square in the bourgeois area of the neighborhood], we all stood together, shop owners and drivers, socialists and conservatives” (interview with Adriene, September 10, 2015)—a spontaneous alliance that formed as quickly as it dissolved after the disappearance of the Frankensteins. Only two years later, however, this alliance of residents of very different socioeconomic backgrounds, professions, and livelihoods resurged.

In 2012, members of the middle-class neighborhood association organized the first of (at least) eight yearly “anniversaries” of the tramway accident, together with favela residents, tourists, tramway drivers, priests from the local Afro-Brazilian religions, and politicians of all political hues. When some of these people sat down at the negotiation table with the representatives of the city government and the public transport company a few days later, they did not demand the withdrawal of something threatening, as in the case of the Frankensteins, but rather claimed the introduction of a different kind of hybrid. The new “bondebus” that has navigated through the neighborhood since 2012 is a mixture of tramway (bonde) and bus only in the metaphorical sense of the word. Without any alteration of its typical design, one of the local public mini-busses that had been introduced to Santa Teresa in the 1980s has been repurposed as bondebus through the simple addition of a discreet, printed sign behind its front panel, announcing a fare of only 0.60R\$. It has gained its nickname from the residents because it maintains the former tramway ticket price without adapting to the yearly rises in public transport fares.

In Santa Teresa, material resistance has been passed on to residents “who could not do otherwise than defend the tramway” (interview with Adriene, September 10, 2015) because of their shared sensory memories around (free) riding. The two situations—the protest against the “Frankensteins” and the introduction of a “bondebus”—point to how the in-betweens of humans and materiality have inspired political action. For quite some time now, scholars across disciplines have taken up the originally feminist endeavor to study emotions and affects as political forces because they emerge out of relations, thus exceeding individual bodies and potentially bringing about new collectivities (Anderson 2014) while at the same time also aligning some residents against others (Ahmed 2001). Drawing from the Deleuzian readings of Spinoza, most of this literature has come to agree on a minimal definition of affect as the “augmentation or diminution of [a] body’s capacity to act” (Massumi 1987, xvi). Similar to conceptualizations in assemblage research, political subjectivities are not taken as predetermined, but as emerging from a distributed set of relations in which the involved “bodies” also include non-humans. In this sense, the two situations described above illustrate how the tramway affected residents of Santa Teresa: How people from hitherto-separated social strata came to form political alliances as the tramway affected their bodies’ movements and mobilized them in defense of its material form.

In the words of Dario, the claims for a tramway comeback had emerged exactly because of these kinds of affective embodiments. “It was as if it [the tramway] had become something carnal [or embodied] to the people, as if it had grown together with the neighborhood and its residents” (interview, October 24, 2015). When I interviewed Dario on a hot December afternoon in 2015, we stepped out of his little grocery store into the daylight so that my companion could get a better camera shot of the situation. Dario was born in Santa Teresa in 1992 and grew up there as the nephew of a tram mechanic and driver who worked all his life with the tramway. Dario remembers his childhood journeys in which he took the tramway at the neighborhood’s central Guimarães square, where he still lives and works, riding off to school at 7 a.m., and to the cinema in the afternoon. His uncle, the tram-driver, reproached him whenever he tried to ride on the footboard, “because I was too small back then” (interview, October 24, 2015). Before its suspension, before the government took over, the tramway transmitted a feeling of liberty to drivers and residents. During the ride, everybody felt “at ease” (ibid.) (*à vontade*), and passengers jumped on and off the vehicles at any time. “You just made a sign and it stopped and took you on board” (ibid.)—stations were not important.

When riding
the footboard,
you always
had to look
ahead, ready
to avoid
lampposts and
street signs
as the tram-
way curved
through the
neighborhood’s
narrow streets

The ease and lightness that Dario associated with footboard riding, however, were complicated somehow through the account of our second interview partner. “You needed to know how to swing” (interview with Paulo, October 27, 2015). Paulo used the Brazilian word *balançar*, which means both to swing and to balance. When riding the footboard, you always had to look ahead, ready to avoid lampposts and street signs as the tramway curved through the neighborhood’s narrow streets. People fell off the tramway or hit their heads many times, the artisan explained. Paulo came to Santa Teresa in 1987, shortly after the end of military dictatorship in Brazil, and opened his small basement atelier in a neighborhood that had gained some fame as a retreat for artists, intellectuals, and other members of the resistance movement. Born in 1957 in a rural part of the poor northeastern state of Bahia, Paulo saw himself as an “autodidact” (ibid.), one who has worked as an actor, painter, and photographer. For the past few years, he had concentrated on building sculptures from recycled metal, mostly depicting people and things from his daily life, such as his model of the Portinha station, which he pointed out during our visit. Portinha (literally “little door”), has long marked the unique entrance to Santa Teresa via tramway. The miniature model of the station is his sign of protest: “Everybody is rebuilding the tramway, but the tramway is not for everyone” (ibid.). Paulo instead rebuilt Portinha. At the station, coming right after the former aqueduct and now railway-bridge that connects Santa Teresa to the city center, the *malandragem* (rascality, idleness, cunningness) begins—with all the ruthlessness and rumors that outsiders fear. “We trained footboard-riding, it was almost like a dance between two lovers (ibid.).” Residents knew

how to swing, Paulo concludes, but accidents and injuries happened with tourists and other outsiders who could not balance.

In contrast to Dario's "liberating" account of footboard riding, Paulo's story rather points to how potential "outsiders," but also disabled people, children, or older residents, were excluded from entering the tram outside stations or without a ticket. Where his "knowing how to swing" clashes with other residents' joyful memories of the footboard as meeting place, accessible for all kinds of different passengers, such a clash points to how the politics of the footboard were multiple, unstable, and sometimes contradictory. The affective attachment to the footboard not only connected *some* residents of Santa Teresa "with some others," but it also aligned them "against other others" (Ahmed 2001, 18). Yet, the quality of this attachment depended not on identifications with a "neighborhood community" or prejudices against "others" in the first place. Rather, the "training" that Paulo describes, and the associated movements, or their repetition, brought about a loose form of collectivity, held together by the embodied "knowledge" that a different way of organizing public transport could be possible.

The question of how political subjectivities emerge from the subtle, sometimes unconscious movements, perceptions, feelings, and sensations in everyday life has recently inspired various academic engagements with the term "micropolitics," originally coined by Deleuze and Guattari (Himada and Manning 2009; Jellis and Gerlach 2017; see also Deleuze and Guattari 2004, 208 ff.). In my case, after playing the two videos of interview footage with Dario and Paulo repeatedly and simultaneously, I noticed a second layer of the interviews (Figure 3). Parallel to the stories that I reported above, both Paulo and Dario began a kind of choreography:

Paulo's hand shoots to the front, closing around an invisible side handle. The rest of his body follows automatically, it seems. Dario's two arms are raised above his head as he swiftly turns around, now facing the sidewalk. A pause, so short it is barely noticeable. The camera follows Paulo's gaze as he looks down. Dario jumps up and down, back and forth between asphalt and curb—laughing, repeating, for the sheer pleasure of doing it. The camera now zooms onto Paulo's rhythmically crossing feet. This is a samba move, I recognize.

What is the quality of the attachments between humans and nonhumans, and what are the political claims and subjectivities that emerge from them? From his insightful study on train commuters in Sydney, David Bissell identifies some of the affective forces at play between different passengers, such as the "timbre of voice, alternations of silence and noise...gestures of swinging and circling around...the opening and closing of doors" (Bissell 2016, 397). As a conflict unfolds in the train cabin, Bissell sensitively observes how the quality of intonations, rhythms, and movements changes. These changes, he argues, reveal "micropolitical transitions" which enable shared feelings or solidarities for some, while



Figure 3. Footboard-dancing. Stills taken from own video-interviews, filmed by ©Amin Müller. [This figure appears in color in the online issue.]

excluding others or limiting their actions. Throughout the movements in the video-interviews, with the simultaneities in gestures and the similarities of expressed emotions, Dario and Paulo reinvigorate their attachments not only to the absent footboard, but also to other potential tramway-passengers. The politics of the footboard-dance, in this sense, lie in its capacity to evoke the tramway’s promises of different ways of moving around the city and being together in public transport. Instead of revealing the momentary transitions that unfold *inside* a moving transport vehicle, Dario’s and Paulo’s swinging and balancing offer us insights about the political force of a relation to something that is no longer *there*.

Since Santa Teresa’s residents last entered the tramway, the affective attachments to the tramway have become deeply ingrained in their subconscious, spurring them almost “automatically” to movement—be it for a sidewalk-*balanço* or for a protest march. Dario’s recollection of the “liberating” feeling of the tram ride can be read as a hint toward affect’s capacity to disrupt existing patterns of public transport politics, such as

fixed stations or ticket obligations. At the same time, Paulo's story of "knowing how to swing" points to the ambivalent affects resulting from the interplay of embodied relations of residents to tramway matter. In this sense, the "affective inheritance" of the footboard, as I will argue in the next section, can have not only revolutionary, but also reactionary effects.

De-politicizing Materiality? The Ambivalence of Affective Attachments

In December 2015, shortly before I conducted the two video-interviews quoted above, the tramway of Santa Teresa reached the neighborhood's central Guimarães square for the first time in four years. After its official re-inauguration in late July of the same year, the new model had so far only circulated on a test track of 1.7 kilometers between the downtown terminal and the first station uphill, thus covering about 10% of the whole rail network. Because the tramway had been placed under protection by the national heritage institute IPHAN in 1983, the new models had to maintain the exact design from the 20th century, including open-sided carriages, wooden rows of benches (no central aisle), and footboards.¹⁰ However, the government agencies introduced an important *technical* change: The new footboard was retractable. After all passengers had entered the tram by stepping on the access assistance that bridged the distance between station and carriage, the driver could now simply press a button to fold it up again. In an interview, the director of Rio's public transport company CENTRAL explained to me that the decision had been made because of "security reasons" (interview with Roberto, September 28, 2015), in order to protect passengers from being injured or falling off during the ride.¹¹ At the same time, it was apparent that this technical change also put an end to the subversive practices associated with the footboard: free riding and jumping on and off outside stations was no longer possible.

In a meeting with members of Brazilian social movements in 1982, Félix Guattari speculated on the limits of micropolitical, or as he also called them, "molecular," transitions: "A molecular movement can't survive for long," he argued, "without establishing a politics in relation to existing forces, economic problems, the media, and so on" (Rolnik and Guattari 2007, 200). Did this mean that in the long run, the political subjectivities and claims emerging from the residents' affective attachments to this specific instance of urban matter would disappear because, together with the introduction of a retractable footboard, the relation to price politics and exclusionary mechanisms in public transport would be lost? From how Dario and Paulo mimicked the footboard dance even four years after this practice was no longer possible, or from Renata's and Marcelo's reclaiming this element's "affective heritage," however, I can

*After all
passengers
had entered
the tram by
stepping on
the access
assistance
that bridged
the distance
between
station and
carriage, the
driver could
now simply
press a button
to fold it up
again*

attest to how the molecular movements, gestures, and feelings associated with the tramway have survived. Residents of Santa Teresa have continued to enact yearly protest marches on the occasion of the fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth (in 2019) anniversaries of the accident that led to the tramway-suspension. Instead of arguing that the collectivity of people and tramway has been de-politicized, I would instead ask *which* kinds of politics the continued relation enables.

To explore this question, residents' reactions to the public announcement of new tramway-fares, or rather, the reactions of a local neighborhood association to this announcement, are quite illustrative. In December 2016, one year into the test phase, the city government determined a ticket price of 20R\$ for one tram journey. The disproportionate fare, which is almost five times higher than a bus ride in Rio, was justified by citing the need to balance the public budget in a time of crisis. With the new price policy, the state authorities also introduced a two-class system: Only "outsiders" would have to pay, while residents of Santa Teresa, following a registration procedure, were allowed to use the tramway for free (Araújo 2016). One month before the new price was adopted, the "communications director" (diretor de comunicação) of the neighborhood association made a concluding statement to an internal debate via the association's mailing list¹²:

The information is clear. Only visitors are charged. We have our position: NOT ONE CENT FROM THE RESIDENTS AS LONG AS THE CONSTRUCTION WORK IS NOT FINISHED. The inhabitants of other neighborhoods have their own associations, protest movements, collectives. We cannot defend their cause [protagonizar suas demandas]. We are, at the moment, fighting for the return of our main means of locomotion [locomoção]. (E-mail message, November 11, 2016, author's translation)

Members will continue to lobby for the tramway's return until the system is fully operating again, as they made clear during various meetings with public authorities, in press declarations, and during manifestations. On the occasion of the sixth anniversary of the tram-accident in 2017, the neighborhood association asked its members to sign a letter to Rio's secretary of transport in order to "verify that the tramway did not return" (E-mail message, August 11, 2017). From my research in the private archive of the neighborhood association, and confirmed throughout conversations with residents, I have found that signature lists have served as important means of verification ever since the foundation of this association in the 1980s. Through asking residents to give proof of the tramways' absence, signature lists and other means of verification might successfully sustain affective attachments to the tramway. At the same time, "fighting for its return," as the communication director of the association makes clear in the e-mail cited above, is not necessarily coupled with fighting against the recent fare rise. The subversive uses of public transport and progressive political claims that the struggle for

the tramway enabled in the past emerge from the same molecular movements that are now associated with a rather nostalgic claim for its preservation as means of transport for a limited group of actors.

As I have argued above, an analysis of the affective relations within a collectivity of people and things reveals not only how affect disrupts, but also how it stabilizes identity categories, “othering” practices, or capitalist orders. In this sense, there is an important difference between claiming a “main means of locomotion” and a means of *public* transport. While supporting the affective attachments of residents to “their” tram, the association at the same time differentiated them from “inhabitants of other neighborhoods,” similar to Ahmed’s point, as outlined above. What is more, with the decision not to protest against the new fare system, the neighborhood association (at least temporarily) accepted a development that brought the tramway as far away from “public transport” as it could get. The tendency toward a predominantly touristic use of the system is enforced by the fact that most passengers from other parts of the city cannot afford to pay 20R\$ for a ride.

Looking at these current developments in Santa Teresa, it seems that the century-long history of “material resistance” has come to a sudden end. The politics of materiality are finally back in the hands of humans, this article could conclude. However, the analytical perspective that I elaborated in the previous sections suggests that the structure of this problem should be flipped. Instead of assuming a sudden change from an abstract “progressive” to a “nostalgic” mindset that impels residents to hold fast to footboard and tramway, I would argue that it is the affective attachment in and of itself that has enabled such a politics. Taking together a concept of agency that includes nonhumans and an approach that accounts for the politics of affect, suggests that the tramway was only “powerful enough to magnetiz[e] an attachment to it” (Berlant 2011, 48), because it potentially guarantees the survival of the variegated desires and urban imaginaries that caused this attachment in the first place.

In other words, the promise of a different kind of public transport and access to the city that is behind some residents’ attachments to the tramway is also the reason why they “nostalgically” hold on to it, even after this promise has been broken. Writing on “cruel optimism,” Lauren Berlant notes that some subjects try to preserve their desired objects with all their force because “whatever the *content* of the attachment, the continuity of the form of it provides something of the continuity of the subject’s sense of what it means to keep on living on” (Berlant 2006, 21, original emphasis). The case of the tramway reveals how urban matter can both enable a political form of collectivity to challenge the ways in which public transport is organized *and* limit this collectivity to a reactionary politics as soon as the attachment becomes an end in itself. In this sense, the argument put forth by Berlant provides an essential explanation for an observation that Guattari made in Brazil almost 40 years ago: that a molecular movement can be at the same time revolutionary

*I would argue
that it is the
affective
attachment
in and of
itself that has
enabled such
a politics*

and still “reveal itself to be reactionary and conservative at the level of the visible structures of social representation” (Rolnik and Guattari 2007, 187).

Conclusion

Understanding how urban forms of political subjectivity emerge beyond “formal” citizenship (Appadurai and Holston 1996; De Koning, Jaffe, and Koster 2015) requires consideration of the role of material entities. The oldest electric tramway of South America, in Rio de Janeiro, has both enabled and limited the formation of a political *collectivity* that relies on elastic affective bonds, ambiguous political demands, and strong attachments between residents and specific instances of infrastructural matter. By concentrating on one single element of the tramway, namely the footboard, I have shown how peculiar relations of people and urban matter can resist and contest but also consolidate the logics of capital accumulation and socio-spatial segregation that dominate current urban (transport) politics (Rolnik 2017).

Through following the footboard back to its first appearance at the turn of the twentieth century, I have argued that it is part of a larger socio-material assemblage that includes residents, tickets, carriage design, transport policies, technological transformations, and multiple urban imaginaries. In the course of the tramway’s century-long history, these heterogeneous elements have co-produced spaces and political subjectivities in Rio. Today, the division of the city into southern and central areas and northern and western peripheries and the related exclusion of favela-residents from the rich parts of the city are entwined with the politics of new and old railway projects. In Santa Teresa, a collectivity of tramway and residents has for a long time resisted this segregative tendency. Footboard-riding, I have argued, enabled, first, an idea of public transport as “mobile meeting place” not limited to fixed stations or schedules. Second, the peculiar experience of togetherness *between* sidewalks and carriages paved the way for the emergence of political subjectivities that continue to contest an allegedly “universal” fare-system. Along with the rising ticket fares in urban Brazil, both local residents and organized activists have come to claim the footboard as a “free riding” device emblematic of the possibility of an alternative organization of public transport around hitchhikers and non-payers.

Drawing from current debates on affect and micropolitics, I have shown how the revolutionary potential of socio-material relations depends on the subtle movements of human bodies that continue to resonate with an already-absent device. The *balanço*, the swinging and balancing of my informants, keeps the promises of the footboard alive despite the tramway’s suspension. However, through a more nuanced reflection on micropolitics, I have pointed out how the attachment to material elements of an infrastructure might have ambivalent and often

contradictory effects. With the recent introduction of a retractable foot-board, the collective of people and tram-elements has not been depoliticized. Instead, the attachment has become “cruel” in that it gives rise to a nostalgic politics of preserving the tramway at the risk of losing its potential to disrupt dominant modes of organizing access to the city.

Notes

Acknowledgments. I would like to thank Adriene, Marcelo, Renata, Paulo, and Dario (all pseudonyms): obrigada a todxs xs moradorxs e trabalhadorxs (do bonde) de Santa para compartilharem lembranças, documentos, reivindicações e desejos relacionados ao bonde. Muito obrigada Leila (Viany) para essa gráfica maravilhosa de um objeto não tão passageiro. I am very thankful to two anonymous reviewers and to the editors of *City & Society* for their valuable comments. Thanks especially to Francesca Pilo’ and Rivke Jaffe for giving me the opportunity to present this paper at the University of Amsterdam and for providing astute and engaged feedback on earlier versions. All remaining errors/omissions are of course my own.

¹N.I.N.J.A stands for Narrativas Independentes, Jornalismo e Ação (Independent Narratives, Journalism and Action). See full video at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a2VJ2aopUgw>.

²Such a perspective on the local struggle confirms the arguments made by urban anthropologists who have strongly advocated for taking seriously the relationship between urban inequalities of race, class, and gender, and the daily uses of public transport in cities around the globe (Czeglédy 2004; Rekhviashvili and Sgibnev 2018; Sheller 2015). As Berna Yazıcı has argued from her study of commuters’ experiences in Istanbul, urban inequalities “are reproduced not only through segregated social spaces, but also on the move, in traffic ... and transport” (Yazıcı 2013: 516).

³I am using *favela* (slum) here deliberately to point to the political dimension of a term that has been used to stigmatize whole areas of Brazilian cities, but which has been re-appropriated by their residents, notably in funk music (Vianna 1988).

⁴All personal names are pseudonyms. All translations from Brazilian Portuguese are my own.

⁵The tramway of Santa Teresa had been electrified in 1896 (Pires 2014).

⁶Cf. the introduction to “Urban Cosmopolitics” by Anders Blok and Ignacio Farías (2016, 3-5)

⁷The so-called *cortiços* were housing units of mainly factory and harbor workers in the central districts of Rio. Their peculiar architecture and organization around a courtyard with shared sanitary facilities generated a social organization based on solidarity and co-operation, which was severely threatened with the destruction of these houses (Abreu 1987, 47).

⁸“O estribo é patrimônio imaterial cultural afetivo do povo de Santa Teresa” in original (the English translation above is my own). Note: The Brazilian word *afeto* relates to “emotions” (most commonly: affections) rather than to the affects that precede them.

⁹Adriene was the president of the neighborhood association during the time of the “Frankensteins” first appearance. She is quoted in section one of this article, for the story of “material resistance.”

¹⁰The National Historic and Artistic Heritage Institute (IPHAN—Instituto do Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico Nacional) put the tramway under protection in 1983 (IPHAN Processo No° 83 E-03/31 269/83).

¹¹CENTRAL stands for Companhia Estadual de Engenharia de Transportes e Logística (State Company for Transport and Logistics Engineering).

¹²The mailing list of the local neighborhood association has existed since the early 2000s. It reaches approximately 380 members and covers about 15 subjects (response emails not counted). With this, it reaches a broader audience than the neighborhood association itself (approx. 230 members, membership fee required), which counts an attendance of between 15 and 35 people at its monthly meetings. In addition to the email listserv, the association also publishes signature lists, announcements of protest actions, and information about neighborhood life in general and tramway-related issues in particular on its private website and Facebook page (which has 15,000 followers).

References

- Abreu, Maurício de. 1987. *Evolução urbana do Rio Janeiro*. Rio de Janeiro: IPLANRIO/Zahar.
- Ahmed, Sara. 2001. “Communities That Feel: Intensity, Difference and Attachment.” In *Conference Proceedings for Affective Encounters: Rethinking Embodiment in Feminist Media Studies*, edited by A. Koivunen and S. Paasonen. Turku: University of Turku, School of Art, Literature and Music, Media Studies.
- Amin, Ash, and Nigel Thrift. 2002. *Cities: Reimagining the Urban*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- . 2016. *Seeing Like a City*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Anderson, Ben. 2014. *Encountering Affect - Capacities, Apparatuses, Conditions*. Farnham, UK: Ashgate.
- . 2017. “Hope and Micropolitics.” *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 35 (4): 593–95.
- Appadurai, Arjun, and James Holston. 1996. “Cities and Citizenship.” *Public Culture* 8 (2): 187–204.
- Araújo, Adriano. 2016. “Passagem de bondinho de Santa Teresa passa a custar R\$ 20 a partir de dezembro.” *O Dia*. Accessed November 10, 2016. <http://odia.ig.com.br/rio-de-janeiro/2016-11-10/passagem-de-bondinho-de-santa-teresa-passa-a-custar-r-20-a-partir-de-dezembro.html>
- Benchimol, Jaime Larry. 1953. *Pereira Passos: Um Haussmann tropical: a renovação urbana da cidade do Rio de Janeiro no início do século XX*. Rio de Janeiro: Secretaria Municipal de Cultura, Turismo e Esportes.
- Bentes, Ivana. 2011. “Subjective Displacements and ‘Reserves of Life’.” *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies* 20 (1): 5–19.

- . 2009. "As novas formas de lutas pós-mídias digitais." *Lugar Comum* 28: 33–38.
- Berlant, Lauren. 2011. *Cruel Optimism*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.
- . 2006. "Cruel Optimism". *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 17 (3): 20–36.
- Bissell, David. 2016. "Micropolitics of Mobility: Public Transport Commuting and Everyday Encounters with Forces of Enablement and Constraint." *Annals of the American Association of Geographers* 106 (2): 394–403.
- Blok, Anders, and Ignacio Farías. 2016. *Urban Cosmopolitics: Agencements, Assemblies, Atmospheres*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Brenner, Neil, David J. Madden, and David Wachsmuth. 2011. "Assemblage Urbanism and the Challenges of Critical Urban Theory." *City* 15 (2): 225–40.
- Cava, Bruno, and Giuseppe Cocco. 2014. *Amanhã vai ser maior: O levante da multidão no ano que não terminou*. Rio de Janeiro: Annablume.
- Caldeira, Teresa. 2012. "Imprinting and Moving Around: New Visibilities and Configurations of Public Space in São Paulo." *Public Culture* 24 (2): 385–419.
- Czeglédy, André P. 2004. "Getting Around Town: Transportation and the Built Environment in Post-Apartheid South Africa." *City & Society* 16 (2): 63–92.
- De Koning, Anouk, Rivke Jaffe, and Martijn Koster. 2015. "Citizenship Agendas in and beyond the Nation-State: (En)countering Framings of the Good Citizen". *Citizenship Studies* 19 (2). Taylor & Francis: 121–27.
- Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari. 2004. *A Thousand Plateaus*. London and New York: Continuum.
- Färber, Alexa. 2014. "Low-Budget Berlin: Towards an Understanding of Low-Budget Urbanity as Assemblage." *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society* 7 (1): 119–36.
- Färber, Alexa, and Birke Otto. 2016. "Saving (in) a Common World: Cosmopolitical Instances from a Low-Budget Urbanities Perspective." In *Urban Cosmopolitics. Agencements, Assemblies, Atmospheres*, edited by Anders Blok and Ignacio Farías, 25–45. New York: Routledge.
- Farías, Ignacio. 2010. "Introduction: Decentering the Object of Urban Studies." In *Urban Assemblages: How Actor-Network-Theory Changes Urban Studies*, edited by Ignacio Farías and Thomas Bender, 1–25. New York: Routledge.
- Frichot, Hélène, Catharina Gabriellson, and Jonathan Metzger. 2016. *Deleuze and the City*. Edinburgh University Press.
- Guimarães, Antonio Sérgio Alfredo. 2006. "Depois da Democracia Racial." *Tempo Social* 18 (2): 269–87.
- Goonewardena, Kanishka, and Stefan Kipfer. 2007. "Postcolonial Urbicide: New Imperialism, Global Cities and the Damned of the Earth." *New Formations* 59: 23–33.
- Harvey, David. 2008. "The Right to the City." *New Left Review* 53 (Sept-Oct): 23–40.
- Himada, Nasrin, and Erin Manning. 2009. "From Noun to Verb: The Micropolitics of 'Making Collective'." *Inflexions: A Journal for Research-Creation* 3:i–viii.
- Jellis, Thomas, and Joe Gerlach. 2017. "Micropolitics and the Minor." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 35 (4): 563–7.
- Kinfu, Eshetayehu, and Daniel Mains. 2017. "Governing Three-Wheeled Motorcycle Taxis in Urban Ethiopia: States, Markets, and Moral Discourses of Infrastructure." *American Ethnologist* 44 (2): 263–74.
- Kemmer, Laura. 2019. "Promissory Things: How Affective Bonds Stretch along a Tramline." *Distinktion: Journal of Social Theory* 20 (1): 58–76.
- Maricato, Ermínia, et al. 2013. *Cidades Rebeldes: Passe Livre e as manifestações que tomaram as ruas do Brasil*. São Paulo: Boitempo.

- Massumi, Brian. 1987. "Notes on the Translation and Acknowledgments." In *A Thousand Plateaus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, edited by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, xvi–xx. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press.
- Massumi, Brian, and Joel McKim. 2009. "Of Microperception and Micropolitics: An Interview with Brian Massumi." *Inflexions: A Journal for Research-Creation* 3:183–275.
- McFarlane, Colin. 2011. "Assemblage and Critical Urbanism." *City: Analysis of Urban Trends, Culture, Theory, Policy, Action* 15 (2): 204–24.
- Merriman, Peter. 2019. "Molar and Molecular Mobilities: The Politics of Perceptible and Imperceptible Movements." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 37 (1): 65–82.
- Morrison, Allen. 1989. *The Tramways of Brazil: A 130-Year Survey*. New York: Bonde Press.
- Pereira, Rafael, David Banister, Tim Schwanen, and Nate Wessel. 2017. "Distributional Effects of Transport Policies on Inequalities in Access to Opportunities in Rio de Janeiro." Accessed September 1, 2017. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3040844>
- Pilo', Francesca, and Rivke Jaffe. 2020. "The Political Materiality of Cities." Special Issue. *City & Society* 32 (1): 6–20.
- Pires, Hindenburgo Francisco. 2014. "A mobilidade urbana em questão: políticas públicas para os sistemas de bondes elétricos." *Biblio 3W Revista Bibliográfica de Geografía Y Ciencias Sociales* 19:1–9.
- Purdy, Sean. 2017. "Brazil's June Days of 2013: Mass Protest, Class, and the Left." *Latin American Perspectives* 46 (4): 15–36.
- Ribeiro, Djamilia. 2019. *Lugar de Fala*. São Paulo: Pólen Produção Editorial LTDA.
- Rekhviashvili, Lela, and Wladimir Sgibnev. 2018. "Placing Transport Workers on the Agenda: The Conflicting Logics of Governing Mobility on Bishkek's Marshrutkas." *Antipode* 50 (5): 1376–95.
- RJ Gov (Rio de Janeiro City Government). 2019. "Histórico das Tarifas." Accessed April 18, 2019. <http://www.rio.rj.gov.br/web/transparenciadamobilidade/exibe conteudo?xml:id=5017063>
- Rodrigues, Matheus. 2018. "Cinco anos após protestos por R\$ 0,20, ônibus do Rio somam 6 aumentos de tarifa e prisões por corrupção." *O Globo*. Accessed June 13, 2018. <https://g1.globo.com/rj/rio-de-janeiro/noticia/cinco-anos-apos-protestos-por-r-020-onibus-do-rio-somam-6-aumentos-de-tarifa-e-prisoas-por-corrupcao.ghtml>
- Rodrigues, Juciano Martins, and Pedro Paulo Machado Bastos. 2016. "State Action in Urban Transportation in the City of Rio de Janeiro: A Reflection on the Bus Fleet Rationalization." In *What Is at Stake in These Games? 2016 Olympics and the Commodification of the City of Rio de Janeiro*, edited by Luiz Cesar de Queiroz Ribeiro, Breno Procópio, Juciano Martins Rodrigues, and Pedro Paulo Machado Bastos, 41–53. Rio de Janeiro: IPURR and Observatório das Metrópoles.
- Rolnik, Raquel. 2017. *Guerra dos lugares: a colonização da terra e da moradia na era das finanças*. São Paulo: Boitempo Editorial.
- Rolnik, Suely, and Félix Guattari. 2007. *Molecular Revolution in Brazil*. Los Angeles: Semiotext(e).
- Saad-Filho, Alfredo. 2013. "Mass Protests under 'Left Neoliberalism': Brazil, June–July 2013." *Critical Sociology* 39 (5): 657–69.
- Sheller, Mimi. 2015. "Racialized Mobility Transitions in Philadelphia: Connecting Urban Sustainability and Transport Justice." *City & Society* 27 (1): 70–91.
- Telles, Vera da Silva. 2006. "Trajetórias urbanas: fios de uma descrição da cidade." In *Nas tramas da cidade: trajetórias urbanas e seus territórios*, edited by Vera da Silva Telles and Robert Cabanes, 69–116. São Paulo: Humanitas.

- Tiburi, Márcia. 2011. "Direito Visual à Cidade—A Estética da PiXação e o caso de São Paulo." *Filosofia Pop*: 39–53. http://www.redobra.ufba.br/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/revista_redobra12_virtual.pdf#page=40
- Vianna, Hermano. 1988. *O mundo funk carioca*. Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar.
- Weid, Elisabeth von der. 1994. "O bonde como elemento de expansão urbana no Rio de Janeiro." *Siglo XIX* 16:78–103.
- Yazıcı, Berna. 2013. "Towards an Anthropology of Traffic: A Ride through Class Hierarchies on Istanbul's Roadways." *Ethnos* 78 (4): 515–42.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Additional supporting information may be found in the online version of this article at the publisher's web site:

Video S1

Video S2