

A vibrant city street scene, likely in Brazil, featuring modern architecture, a Brazilian flag, and a diverse group of people walking and cycling. The street is wide and paved, with a pedestrian crossing in the foreground. A man in a white t-shirt and a woman in a dark dress are walking hand-in-hand across the street. In the background, there are tall buildings, trees, and a clear blue sky. A white text box is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing the title and subtitle.

# Seeing Global Cities through a Local Lens

A semester in India, Brazil and South Africa

IHP Cities in the 21st Century, Ella Rasp



**New York  
City, USA**



**Ahmedabad,  
India**



**São Paulo,  
Brazil**



**Cape Town,  
South Africa**





# Research: Transport Subversions





# Methodology

1

## Observation

Commercial and high density areas to observe general patterns, then specific new projects.

2

## Interview

Street users attempted to represent diverse identities, academics, advocates and planners

3

## Secondary Sources

Gathering alternate perspectives and project data from international NGO participants

4

## Analysis

Cross-analyzing structures of participation and project outcomes



# Demand is Growing

## 01

Across the four cities evaluated, population growth paired with a car-centric urban development model is adding up to a recipe for congestion and unsustainable cities.

### Planning for Growth

The answer in previous decades has been to build more roads. Today citizens and planners are seeking new paradigms for movement of people in constrained resource environments.





# Capital is Flowing

## 02

NGOs, most with a United States or Western European base, are advocating for and contributing to plans for these transport projects. Colonial power dynamics are being reproduced with the export of best-practice.

### Neoliberalism:

As these cities are building a brand as Global Cities or Smart Cities, progressive transportation projects help attract capital from abroad and spur development.



Global Designing  
Cities Initiative



ITDP

C40  
CITIES

CLIMATE LEADERSHIP GROUP

Bloomberg  
Associates



# Disconnect is Showing

## 03

When local ways of moving aren't put at the forefront of new infrastructure projects, it shows in the streets.

- 01 | New York City, NY, USA
- 02 | Ahmedabad, India
- 03 | São Paulo, Brazil
- 04 | Cape Town, South Africa





New York City, NY, USA

# Projects plus policy overcomes controversy

This kind of contextualized success is often what gives rise to the export of transportation infrastructure to cities also seeking solutions to ever-expanding mobility demand and limits to resources.







Ahmedabad, India

# Street culture versus car culture: a losing cultural battle

What limited citizen participation there is in Ahmedabad is only in the final design phases, not in developing solutions. Over half of trips are already made by foot or bike, but current trends and inability to adapt may shift this predominance.





São Paulo, Brazil

# Plan for the city *they* want

Capacity of local transportation advocacy groups is being tapped into, and city policy has been supporting investment in infrastructure. But inequality still is a barrier.



Cape Town, South Africa

# Context is critical, showing need for local capacity building

Contrasting the success of the partnerships built through the Violence Prevention through Urban Upgrading with the issues present in BRT implementation presents stark case study.

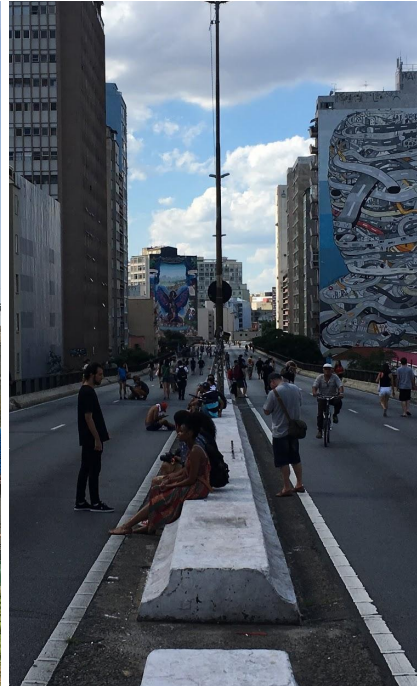




# Shifting Power.

Acting on transportation issues may reproduce historic power structures and daily resistance. But not acting to shift away from car-centric urban planning models will entrench inequalities and violence.

It's about implementation and using the process to shift power to local solutions that move toward equitable resource outcomes.





# Coming home

- Activity in US advocacy orgs
- Summer Internship
- Senior Thesis writing





**Thank you CTS!**

