WEAVING CONTROVERSIES ABOUT URBANITY:
Translations of Pires de Almeida Street
Rio de Janeiro - Brazil

Paulo Afonso Rheingantz, D.Sc.

Associate Professor
School of Architecture & Urbanism, Federal University of Rio de Janeiro

Research Group Quality of Place and Landscape (ProLUGAR)

www.fau.ufrj.br/prolugar   e-mail: par@ufrj.br

Part I

Presenting Rio de Janeiro: The City where I Leave

Rio de Janeiro, "Wonderful City"

Rio de Janeiro, "Wonderful City"

Rio de Janeiro, "Wonderful Landscape"

[Old Rio – Pictures by Camões]

Part II
Advices for Young Designers & Observers

"Any experience of reality is indescribable. Look around for a while and see, hear, smell and feel where you are. Your consciousness can share all this in a single instant, but you will never be able to describe such an experience. "
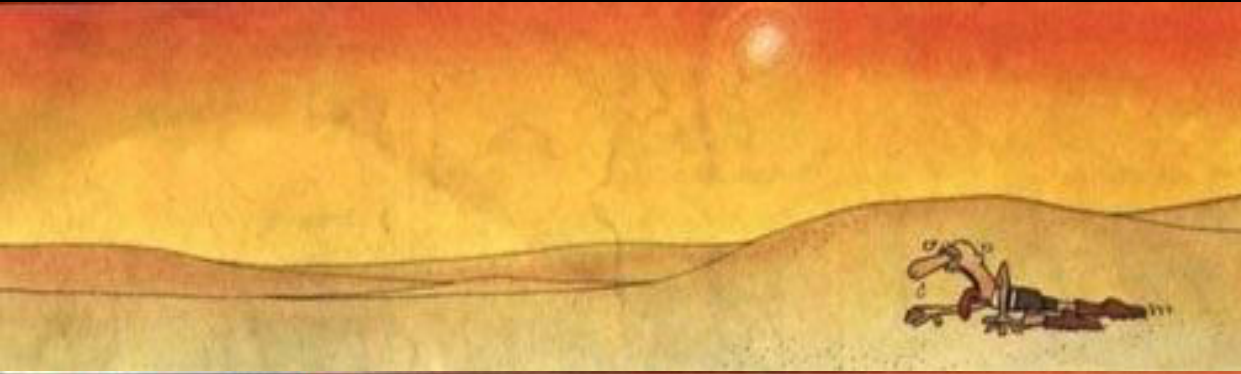
R. D. Laing

"Concepts can be too rigid or limited to express the dynamic nature of senses of the body and mind"
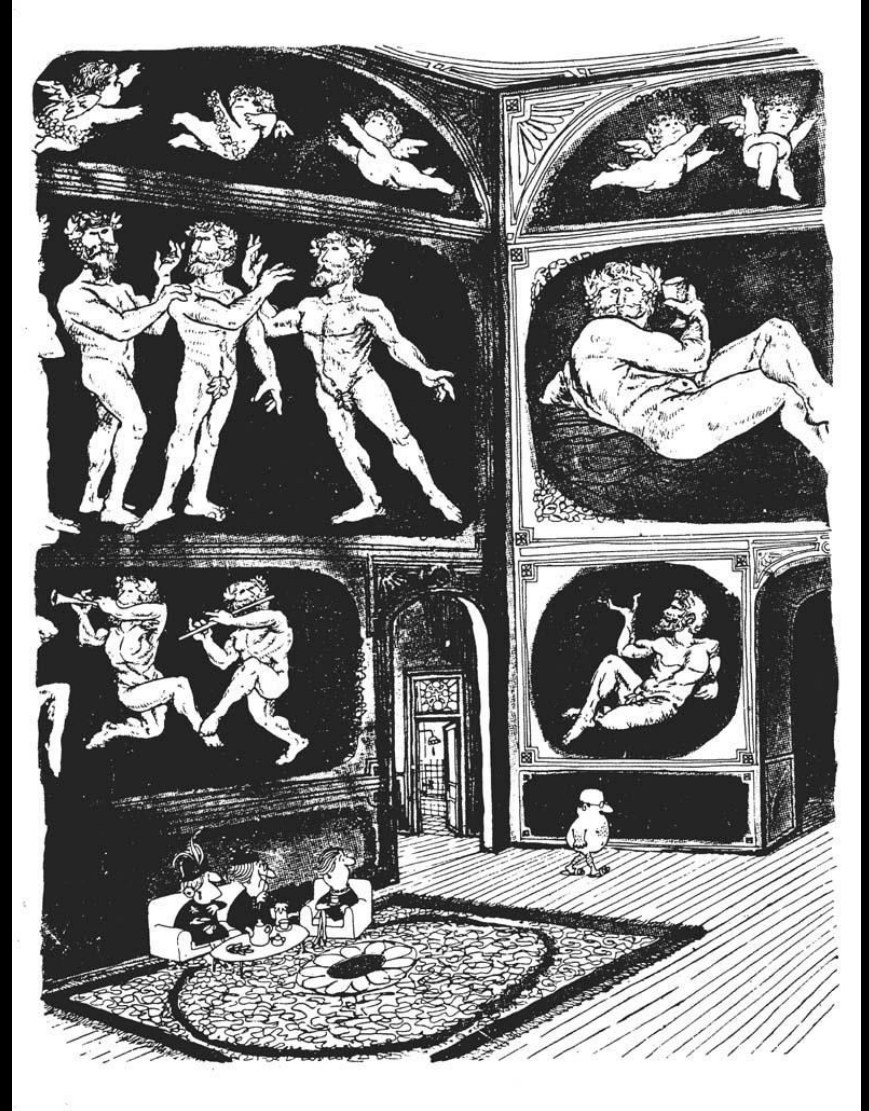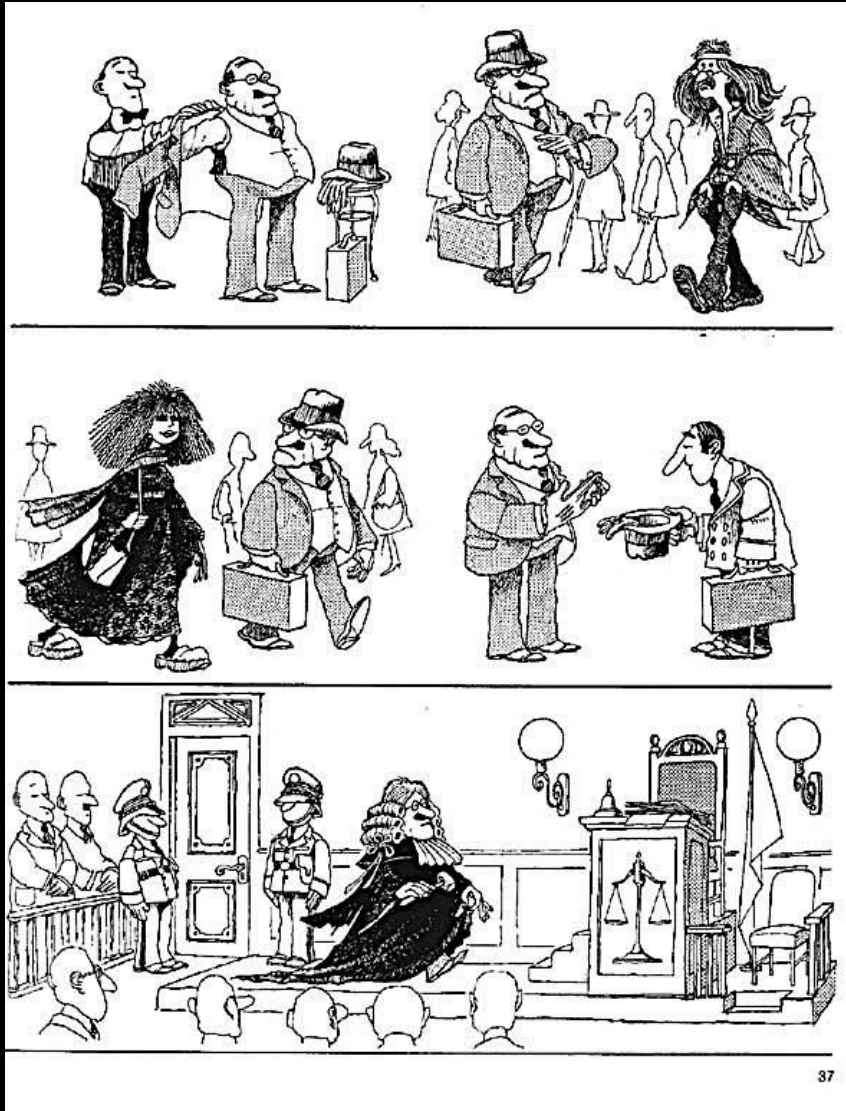
Tartang Tulku

"There is no a world out there, not because non-exist a world, but because there is no a mind inside."
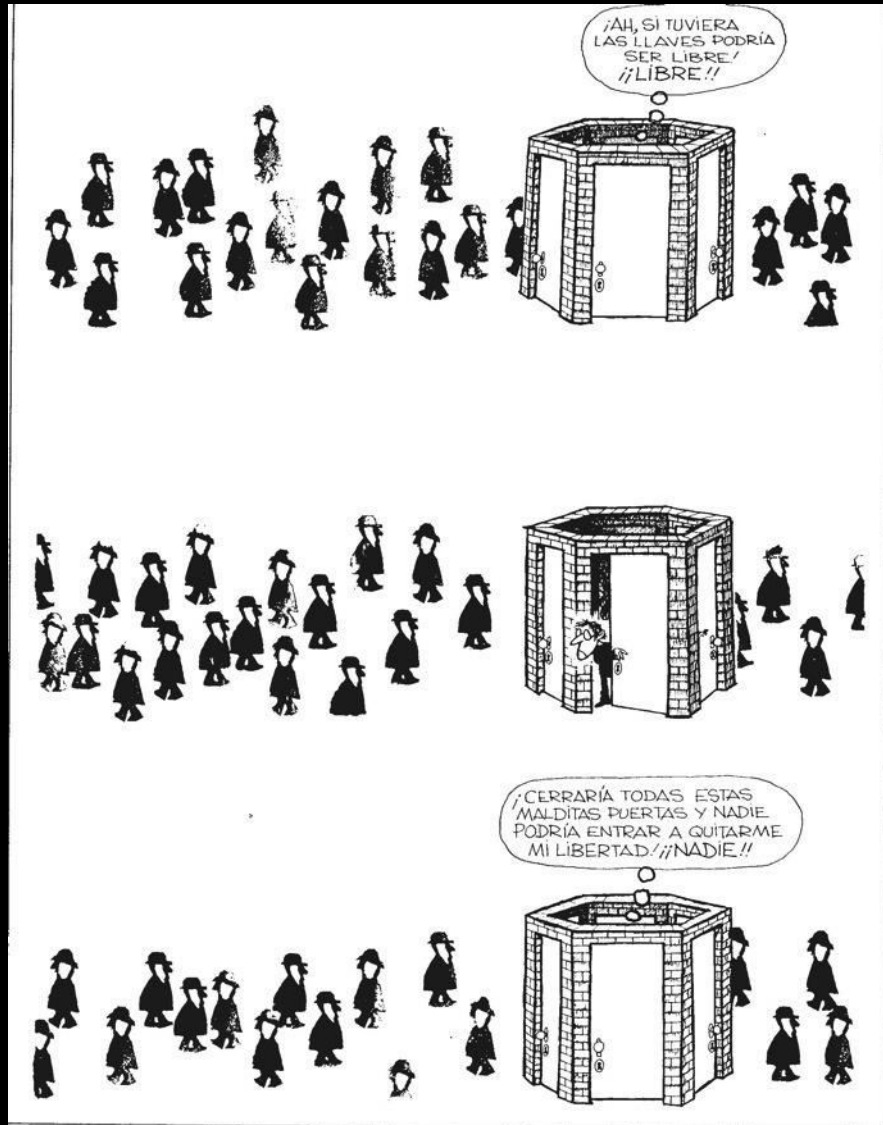
Bruno Latour

Illusion & "Reality"

Context & Subjetivity of "Reality"

Desire & Racionality of "Reality"

Part III

Sociotechnical Networks & Analysis of Controversies

Sociotechnical Network

- Nodes and relations in the production of social settings and subjective

- Search translate complexity present in these relationships

- Highly unstable and dynamic configuration

- Intense exchanges between the various points, connections and actors

- Assemblages are articulated around common goals

- Actors do/undo alliances and networks, redefine its components

- Actor is a heterogeneous network shaped by relations

- A network effect that, in turn, participate and casts other networks

- The network establishes a heterogeneous field of tensions

SYNTHESIS IS NOT A NECESSARY RESULT

Actor-Network Theory [ANT]

- Mixture of men, things and techniques

- Whose movement "erases" borders between subject & object

- Attempt to order heterogeneous elements around a common thread

- Questions, durations & actors are not comparable

- But are INVOLVED in the SAME STORY …

- The network is the ARIADNE'S THREAD of these confusing stories

- Any phenomenon is the product of this HETEROGENEOUS ENGINEERING network – which participate the social, technical, conceptual & textual

- Actors are network effects

Translation & To Translate

TRANSLATION:

- Ability of an actor "decodes" the desires of another actor

- Displacement, deviation or nonexistent relationship mediation before

- Modifies the actors involved therein, and also modifies the network

TO TRANSLATE:

- Assign a role to be played by an actor in a network

- Lend identification, the continues practice of the actors of the network

- FOLLOWING THE ACTORS IN THE NETWORK AND LET THEM TALK

- Apprehend the NETWORK AS IT DOES

   [MAPPING THE DYNAMICS OF THEIR RECIPROCAL TRANSLATIONS]

Controversies

- Dispute involving different viewpoints or translations

- Prefered places of observation

- Show actors and its mobilizations in the construction of narratives

- Show social processes that can be hidden

- Prefered *locus* to understand the current society

- Not limited to nature, scientific arguments or actors ' interests

Bruno Latour:

- Society is inconceivable without the MEDIATION of technical objects

- We DEPEND ON houses, cars, computers, telephone and Internet

Collective:

Bruno Latour

- "Instead of 'outside' reality, 'inside' mind and 'under' multitude we sense what I call collective"

- To forming alliances, interests should be translated, displaced, misappropriated in order to mobilize other actors and other networks

- Human and non human are interlinked in a collective or social network of material and immaterial elements

Rosa Pedro

- Mixture of men, things and techniques whose movement "erases" the borders between subject and object

Urbanity & [non]Urbanity

- <u>Dictionary</u>: quality or condition of being urban; civility

- <u>ANT</u>: can be different from the concepts used to interpret it

- Experience in place that cannot be represented by theories

- Heterogeneous set of relationships between humans and non-humans

Urbanity implicate coexistence with [Non]urbanity

- Like the dynamic equilibrium between complementary and opposite forces of Yin-Yang

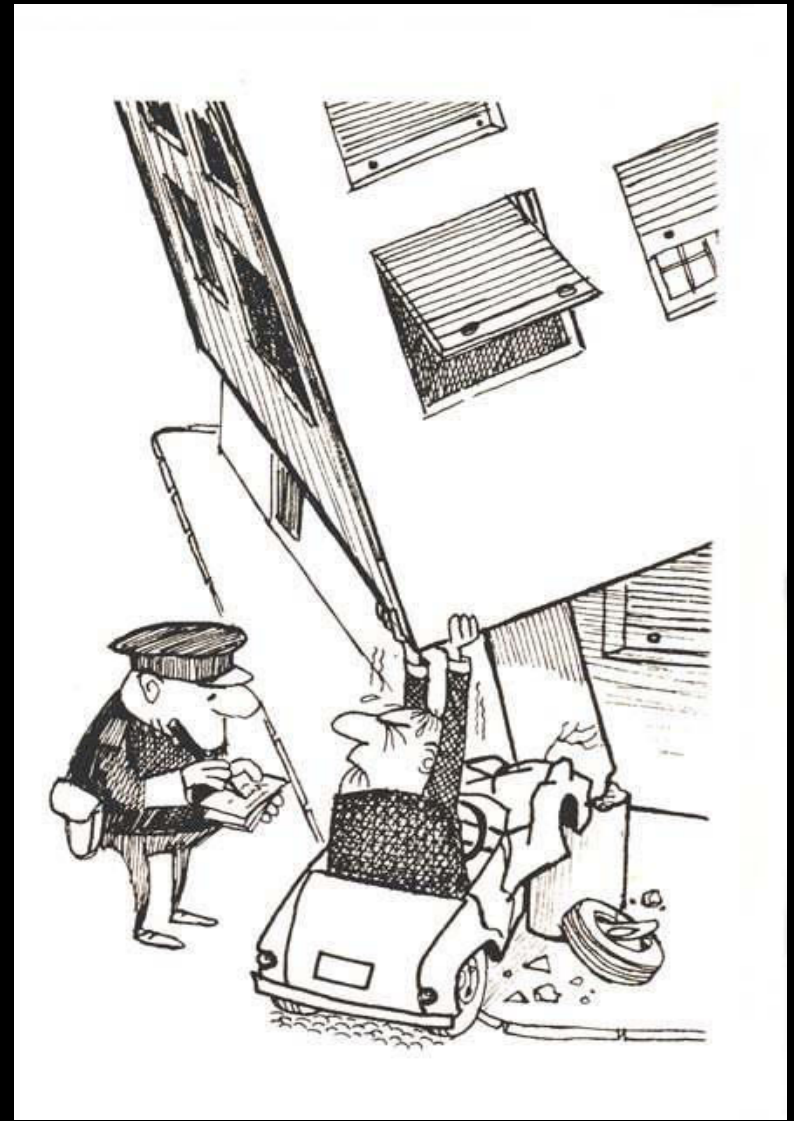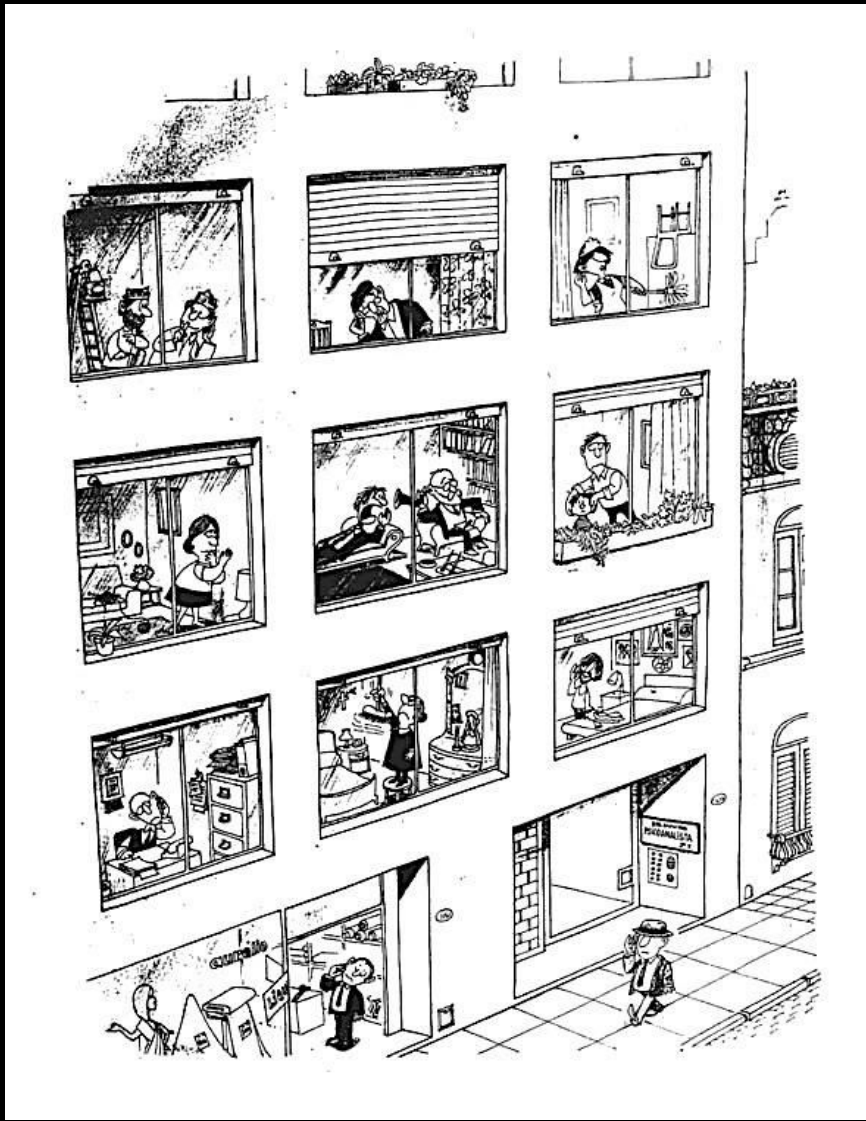- What is considered Urbanity for one, can be [Non]-urbanity to other

Modernisn [International Style]

- "Depersonalization" of the built environment

- Control technologies are recruited to "minimize" the effects of "human error"

- Reliability of non-human actors

- Built environment is a hybrid system of humans and nonhumans

Built Environmental Performance

Part IV
Method:
Mapping Controversies

Step 1 – Trace the Genesis

Trace the genesis of COLLECTIVE Pires de Almeida Street

Understanding that the historicity of each process

Is built with its own and differentiated characteristics

KEY-QUESTIONS:

(1) As the network came to establish itself as such?

(2) Which actors are involved in the process?

(3) What devices were mobilized?

(4) As the alliances have been established?

(5) Which controversies and dilemmas have arisen and how they were resolved or bypassed?

Step 2 – Map Network Dynamics

MAP the DYNAMICS of the network,

Follow the "NETWORK IN ACTION", to identify:

- The spokespersons

- Follow the network movements

- Collect facts and words seeking the point of view of the various actors

- Map assemblages of human and non-human actors in the network

- To prospect the network actors' vision of the future

(POSITIVE ASPECTS, OBSTACLES, CHALLENGES, SUGGESTIONS)

Step 3 – Analize the Controversies

Examine the controversies that are able to articulate, to identify:

- Main themes

- Rhetoric that underlie the actors' arguments (strong and weak)

- Tacit agreements and common shared by the actors

- Directions resulting from reciprocal translation games

- Identify new social arrangements and subjectivity produced by dynamic sociotechnical networks

- Themes' repercussions in their prospective aspects, as translated by different actors

Step 4 – Translate Network

Despite the effort to keep the methodological rigor of the research

- Will always be a "translation" of researchers

- Recognition demand special attention to the process of negotiation of those translations with the "actor-network-object of research"

Material collected in the search field:

- Must be analyzed based on the analysis of controversies,

- Seeking understanding of the networks of sociality

- That articulate and effects of subjectivation that produce.

Part V

Case Study:
Weaving the Collective
Pires de Almeida Street

Following the Actors (1)

Brief history of Laranjeiras & Cosme Velho

Century XVI, VXII e VXIII – Water supply and fertile soil

- Crops – mandioca, sugar cane and orange tree

- Deforestation, cattle and horses [transport]

- Bucolic-influential people, European romantic and escaped black
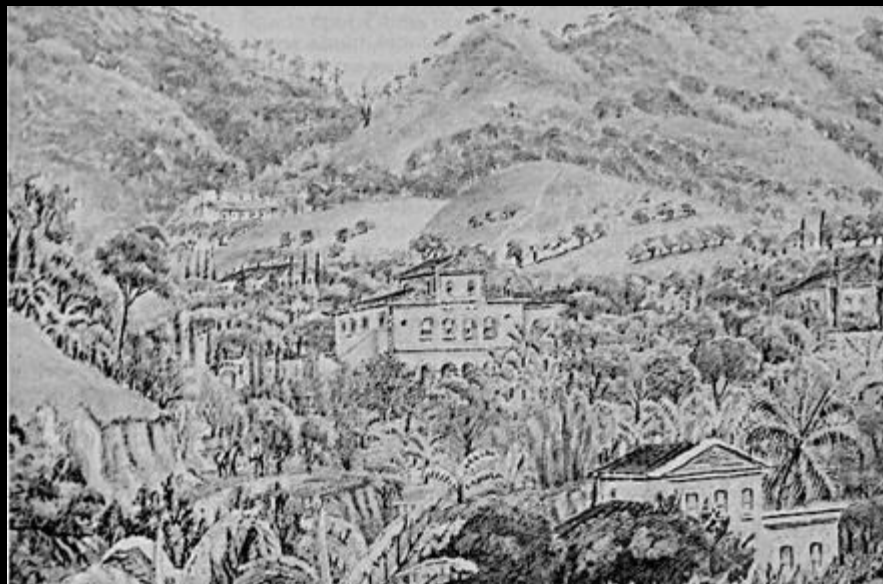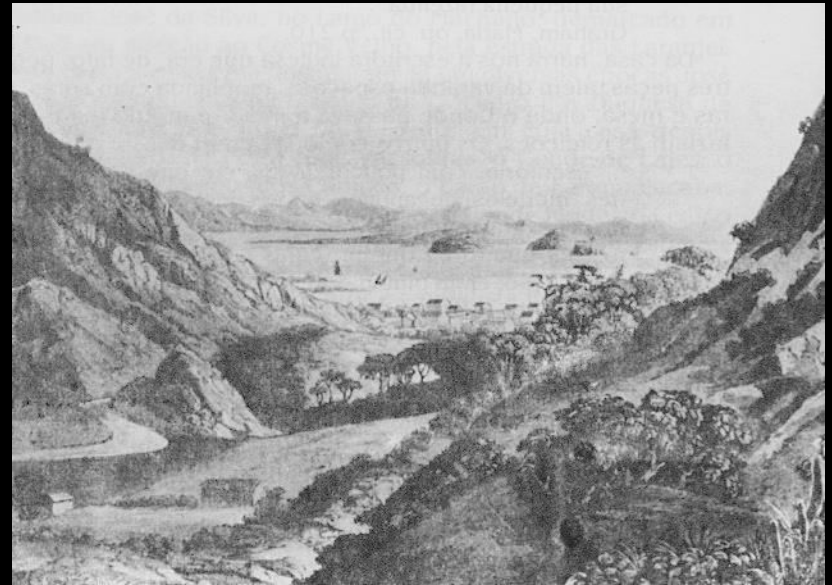
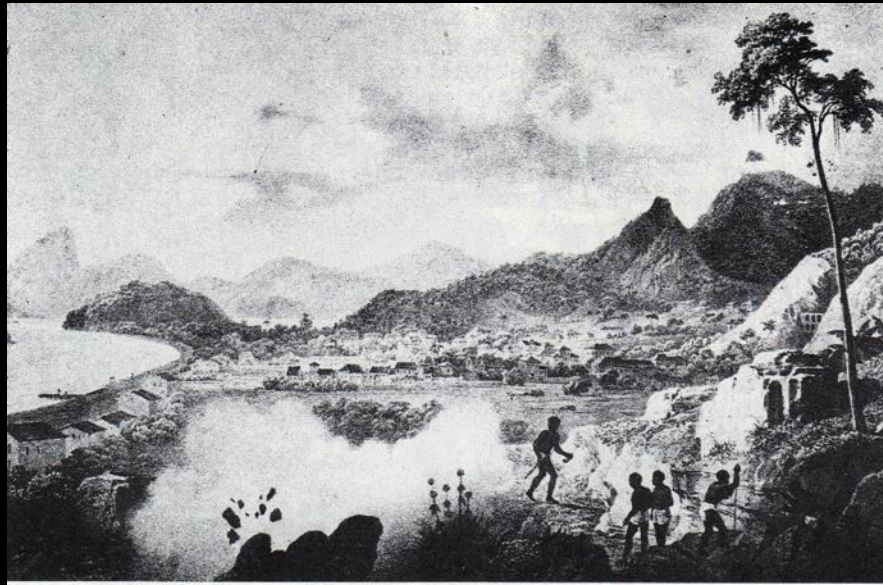Century XIX – Exhaustion of the land

- Aristocratic neighborhood, with large ranches and residences [party]

1880 – Company Fiação e Tecidos Aliança

- Industrial and proletarian merged with ranches and houses

- Chanelling the Carioca River

Century XX – Disordered occupation and verticalization

Imagens - Laranjeiras e Cosme Velho

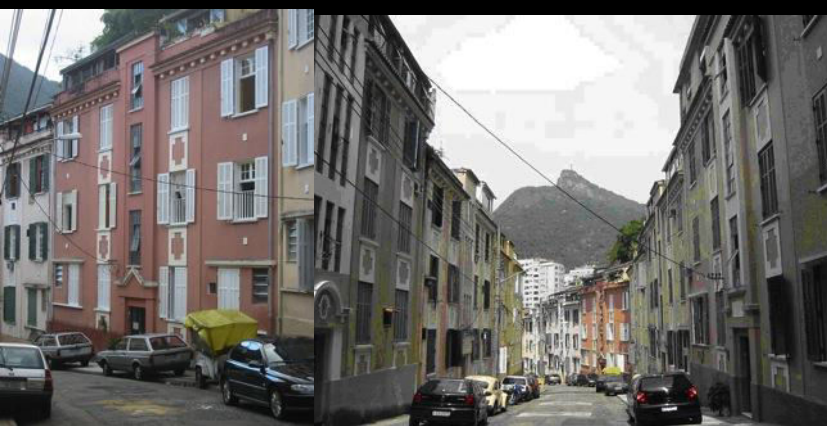# Following the Actors (2)

Project of the Sul America Garden [original name]

- Property: Companhia Nacional de Seguros Sul América
- Land with 160.000 feet^2
- Built between 1927/1930 by contractor Monteiro Aranha
- 23 art deco style buildings divided into 3 hierarchical sectors
- 158 units 1 to 4 rooms to House employees
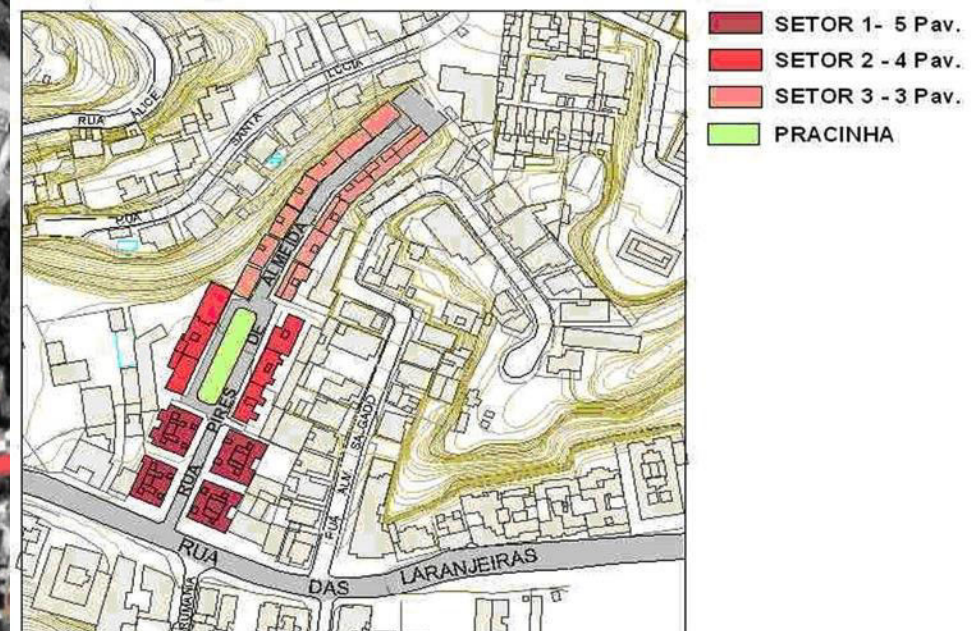
Images of the Pires de Almeida Street

Setor "A"

Setor "B"

Setor "C"

Following the Actors (3)

History of Pires de Almeida Street:

- 1940 /50 – Constr. warehouse, bathroom and garage West currency

- 1951   – Units sold and land in installments

- 1950/60 – Constructed roof in the parking lot in East

- 1960 … – Modification and addition back facades - sector "A"

- 1970 … – Installed air-condicioned in the fachadas

- 1970 … – Built walls and gates in parking areas

- 1970 … – Construction of roofs defaces terraces sectors "B" e "C"

- 1994   – Cancels installed on the access to Laranjeiras Street

- 2000… – Aluminium gates installed in the garage access

Project Modifications

Following the Actors (4)

City Hall Administration

- Lack of Cirty Hall supervision enable building decharacterization

- 1986 – City Hall preserves 4 buildings of Setor "A"

- 1987 – Street, square and buildings-Environmental preservation area

- 1991 – Pires de Almeida - preservation sub-area

- 1991 ... – Compulsory licensing of works and repairs

- 1994 ... – tax exemption for buildings that maintain originality of facades

- 1991 ... – Facades and external elements modified without licensing

- 1991... – Supervision of the City Hall did not prevent modifications

- 2010 – Condo number 15 folds of tax exemption

Following the Actors(5)

Animals:

Prior to human occupation and its buildings

Some possible translations of his "speech"

- Cows, horses, chickens – eliminated/urbanization

- Insects – flies, mosquitoes, bees, etc.

- Birds – enriches sounding landscape

- Small Monkeys – moving through the trees of the square

- Bats – "incursions" by kitchens and rooms

- Dogs – use the square as a restroom

- Handlers end residents of nearby also tends to bring their dogs to do their physiological needs – they say that the dogs "prefer" to do physiological needs in a 'quiet place'

Following the Actors (6)

Vehicles:

- Few PARKING places for parking =

  IRREGULAR VEHICLES

- Vehicles occupy sidewalks

- Vessels prevent parking on sidewalks

- Movement of pedestrian, shopping carts, or babies moving down the street

- customers and employees of companies, gyms and school theater park their cars on the street

Following the Actors (7)

Newspapers:

- Transmits positive image
- Values material aspects, immaterial, sentimental and subjective.
- Architectural and historical importance recognizes.
- Favoring the presence of residents and visitors illustrious: Cândido Portinari, Ernesto Nazareth, Noel Nutels, Affonso Reidy
- Refuge for critics of the military regime
- Housing alternative artists - 1970s
- Meeting point of the Hell's Angels - 1980s

"Little piece of Europe preserved in Rio"
"A public square almost private"

Anyway, humans – Residents' voice:

"All my friends are here. Everyone knows and I can stay until one, two o'clock in the morning in the Square".

"Here is very calm"

"Here I found a little of the interior life in Rio de Janeiro".

"Crossing the gate I feel like to be entering another era, with the art deco architecture of buildings and their proportional height and width of the street, the banter of children, the conversations of escorts and the bark of dogs."

"People in the window - habit of observing what is happening on the street and in the square.

"When you arrive or leave got the impression of being guarded around the clock – good for security feeling, bad for always be controlled."

Seguindo os Atores (8)

<u>Enfim, os Humanos – (a) Moradores:</u>

"As I am moving away from rua das Laranjeiras, start listening to the conversation of the people, the noise of pans and of the balance sheet."

"I'm bewitched to hear the rustle of the leaves of almond or the singing of the birds and the monks movement; the smell of the Earth during the rainy season. "

"I'm disturbed by:

- "the adolescents' loud noise in lively and relaxed evening groups – sometimes excessively annoying";
- "noisy morning litany of gym teachers,
- "music pasteurized and noisy house parties and neighbouring Club,
- "morning talk of "brotherhood" of porters washing cars and sweeping the street.

Seguindo os Atores Humanos

Film of the Collective Pires de Almeida

In Conclusion

Example of Pires de Almeida confirms John Law:

- There are types of realities temporarily stable that are managed with greater or lesser efficiency by science, which are not captured by its research methods

- Pains and pleasures, hopes and fears, intuitions and seizures, loss and coupon redemptions, mundanities and visions, angels and demons, things slip, appear and disappear, which change shape, unpredictabilities

In Conclusion

SITUATED INVESTIGATION (Law 2004)

- Know similar to how we deal with our emotions,

   "the world of sensitivities, passions, intuitions, fears and betrayals" (Law)

- Rethink understanding of clarity and rigor

- Explore ways of deliberate inaccuracy know uncertain/evasive

- Rethink the distance between what we know and what we believe in our daydreams

- If they make sense in other places or times

- Think our relationship with knowledge

- Understanding distance between significance of Urbanity-[Non]urbanity and (illusory) possibilities (illusory) of its implementation

In Conclusion

"If much of the world is fuzzy or vague, unspecified or elusive, emotional or ephemeral, intangible or indistinct, changes like a kaleidoscope, or don't really have a standard to follow ... how can we capture some of the realities that we are losing actuality?"

John Law

THANK YOU!