

The Street Is Ours

The streets of Rio de Janeiro have long been characterized as exuberant and exotic places for social commerce, political expression, and the production and dissemination of culture. *The Street Is Ours* examines the changing uses and meanings of Rio de Janeiro's streets and argues that the automobile, by literally occupying much of the street's space and by introducing death and injury on a new scale, significantly transformed the public commons. Once viewed as a natural resource and a place of equitable access, deep meaning, and diverse functions, the street became a space of exclusion that prioritized automotive movement. Taking an environmental approach, Shawn William Miller surveys the costs and failures of this spatial transformation and demonstrates how Rio's citizens have resisted the automobile's intrusions and, in some cases, reversed the long trend of closing the street against its potential utilities.

Shawn William Miller is Associate Professor of History at Brigham Young University. He is an environmental historian and the author of *An Environmental History of Latin America* (Cambridge, 2007) and *Fruitless Trees: Portuguese Conservation and Brazil's Colonial Timber* (2000).

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The Street Is Ours

*Community, the Car, and the Nature of Public Space
in Rio de Janeiro*

SHAWN WILLIAM MILLER
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*A natureza, como a história, não se faz brincando.
(Nature, like history, follows no frivolous course.)*

Joaquim Maria Machado de Assis, *Dom Casmurro* (São Paulo:
Companhia de Melhoramentos, 1968), 206.

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Map 1 Central Rio de Janeiro, 1867. Based on “Nova Planta da Cidade do Rio de Janeiro” (Rio de Janeiro: E. & H. Laemmert, 1867), Division of Maps, Library of Congress, Washington, DC. Religious edifices in black.

Key

1. Rua do Ouvidor (street)
2. Rua Direita (street)
3. Praça de São Francisco de Paula (square)
4. Largo da Misericórdia (square)
5. Rua da Assembléia (street)
6. Rocio Pequeno (square, later Praça Onze de Junho)
7. Praça da Constituição (square, formerly Rocio Grande)
8. Campo da Aclamação (square)
9. Estação Dom Pedro II (train station)
10. Passeio Público (park)
11. Largo da Carioca (square)
12. Largo do Paço (square)
13. Largo do Capim (square)
14. Largo de São Domingos (square)
15. Praça Municipal (square)
16. Santa Casa da Misericórdia (hospital)
 - A. Morro de Santo Antônio (hill)
 - B. Morro de São Bento (hill)
 - C. Morro do Castelo (hill)
 - D. Morro do Senado (hill)
 - E. Morro da Conceição (hill)
 - F. Morro do Livramento (hill)

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Map 2 Central Rio de Janeiro, c. 1965. Based on *Atlas da evolução urbana da cidade do Rio de Janeiro, ensaio: 1565–1965* (Rio de Janeiro: Instituto Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro, 1965), 26. Religious edifices represented with +.

Key

1. Assistência Médica Central (first-aid clinic)
2. Santa Casa da Misericórdia (hospital)
3. Avenida Rio Branco (formerly Central)
4. Avenida Vargas
5. Garagem Menezes Cortes (parking structure)
6. Praça Onze de Junho (square)
7. Praça Tiradentes (square)
8. Praça da República (square)
9. Estação Dom Pedro II (train station)
10. Passeio Público (park)
11. Largo da Carioca (square)
12. Praça Quinze de Novembro (square)
13. Largo da Misericórdia (square)
14. SAARA Pedestrian Shopping District
15. Praça Mauá (square)
16. Santos Dumont Airport
17. Aterro do Flamengo (highway)
- B. Morro de São Bento (hill)
- E. Morro da Conceição (hill)
- F. Morro do Livramento (hill)

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