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# *A study of the mobility and accessibility needs of low income residents in Recife*



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CHAIR: HERRIE SCHALEKEMP



# Study aim and methodology

- To offer a qualitative overview of the mobility, accessibility and transport needs of people living in low income communities in Recife, Brazil
- To offer new Latin American perspectives on existing primarily 'Northern hemisphere' discussions of transport disadvantage and transport-related social exclusion
- 2 study areas
  1. Coque (inner city, 500m from public transport hub and good local access to key activities)
  2. Santa Terezinha (city periphery, more than 1km from a public transport axis and poor local access to key activities )
- 4 focus group discussions in each area (2-3 hours each)
  - Housewives with childcare responsibilities
  - Unemployed women
  - Unemployed men
  - Scholars aged 14-15 years (Coque – females, St Theresina – males)
- 8-12 participants in each group = 78 people in total

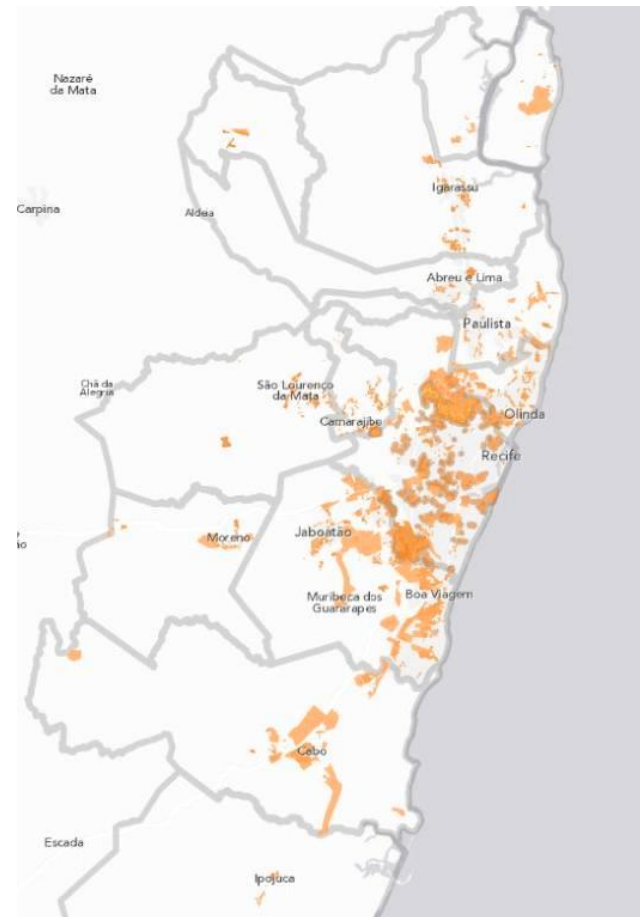
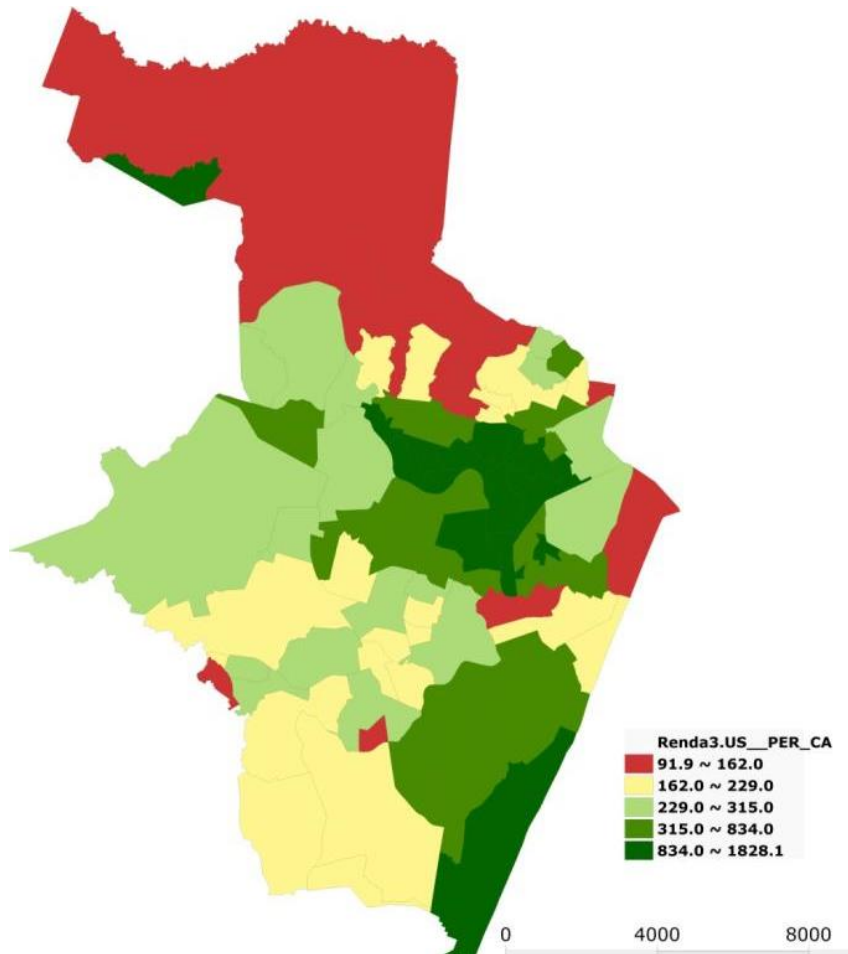
# Rationale for the study

- Increased need to travel for everyday activities in rapidly development context of Brazilian cities
- Transport costs more than trebled in last 20 years
- In 1990 census, a family earning 1-3 minimum wage paid < 15% on transport costs
- Approx. 37 million people prevented from using public transport due to high cost of fares

# Case study context

- Recife is the capital of Pernambuco in North East Brazil
- 3.7 million people live in wider metropolitan area
- Recife growth rate above national average since mid-2000s
  - 2007-2010 Brazil = 4% Recife = 6.6%
- Recently mainly oil, gas, petrochemicals and automobile manufacturing plus massive and still developing port of Suape in South of region
- But in 2007 Recife's GDB per capita was still ½ of Brazilian rate approx. US\$4000 p.a. (23<sup>rd</sup> poorest metropolitan area)
- Also income is very evenly distributed:
  - US\$92 p.m. in lowest income neighbourhoods compared with US\$1,800 in richest

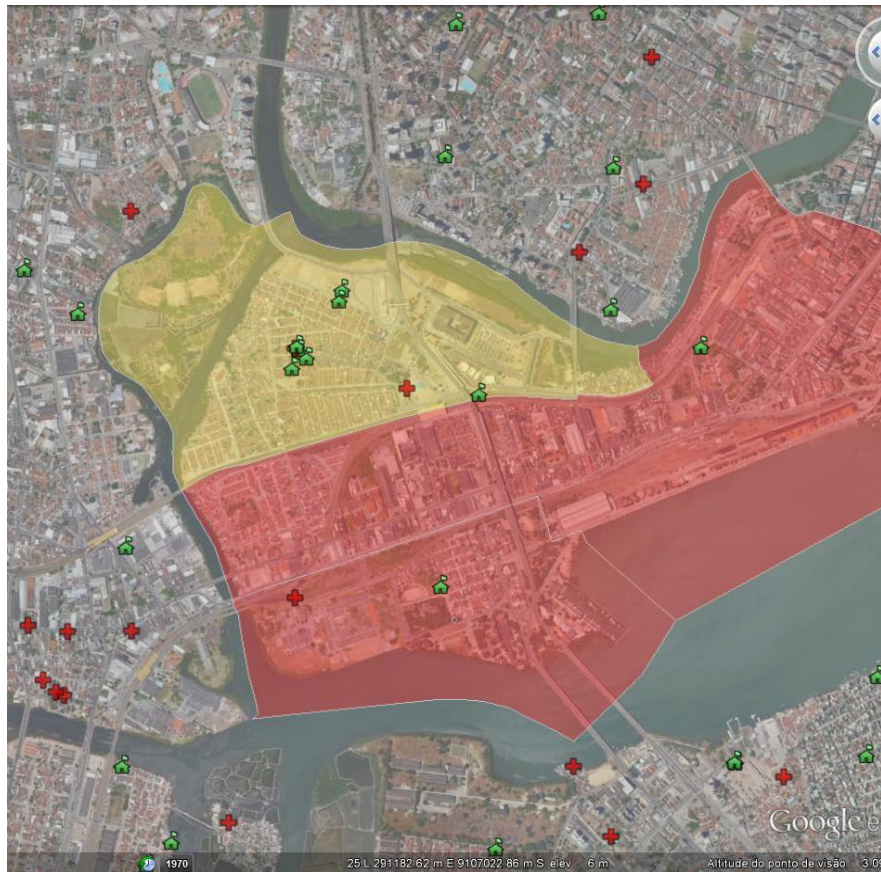
# Income distribution and location of poor areas in Recife



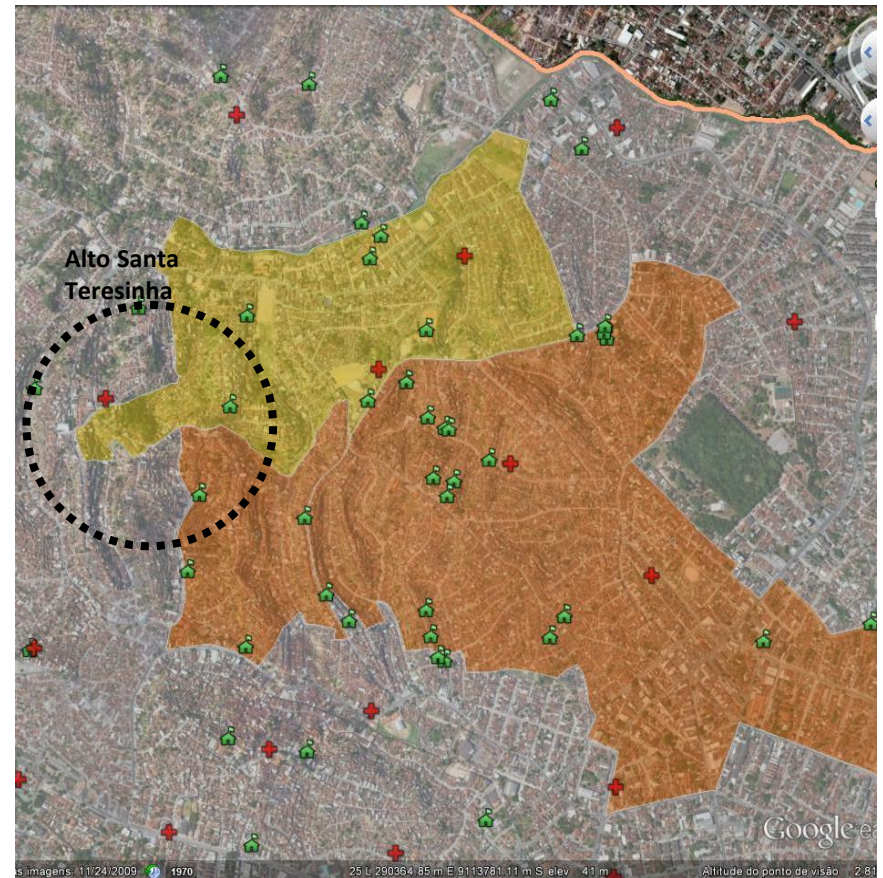


# GIS maps: health & education facilities

## Coque



## St Terezinha



# Demographic density and bus services

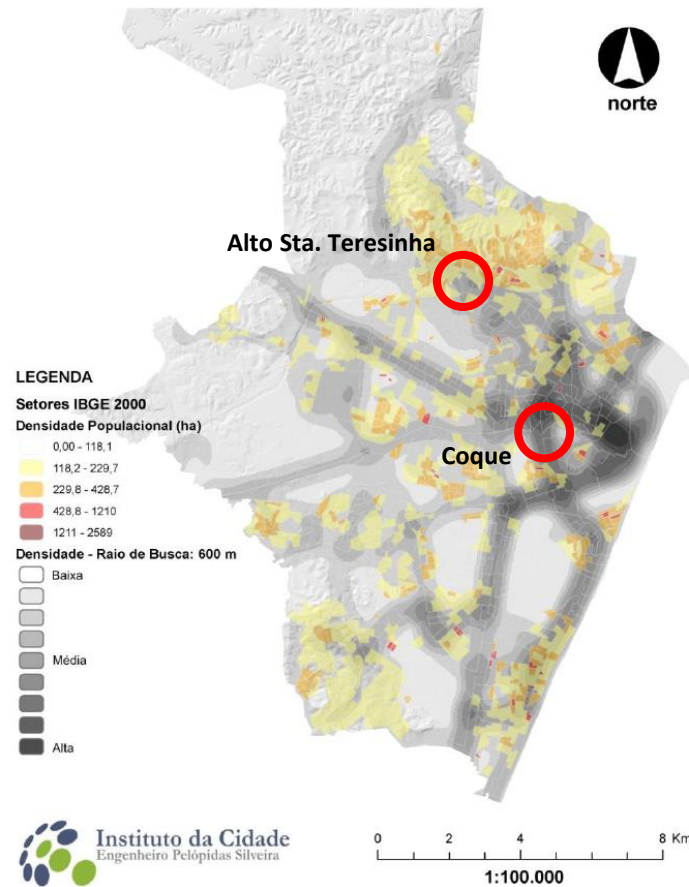
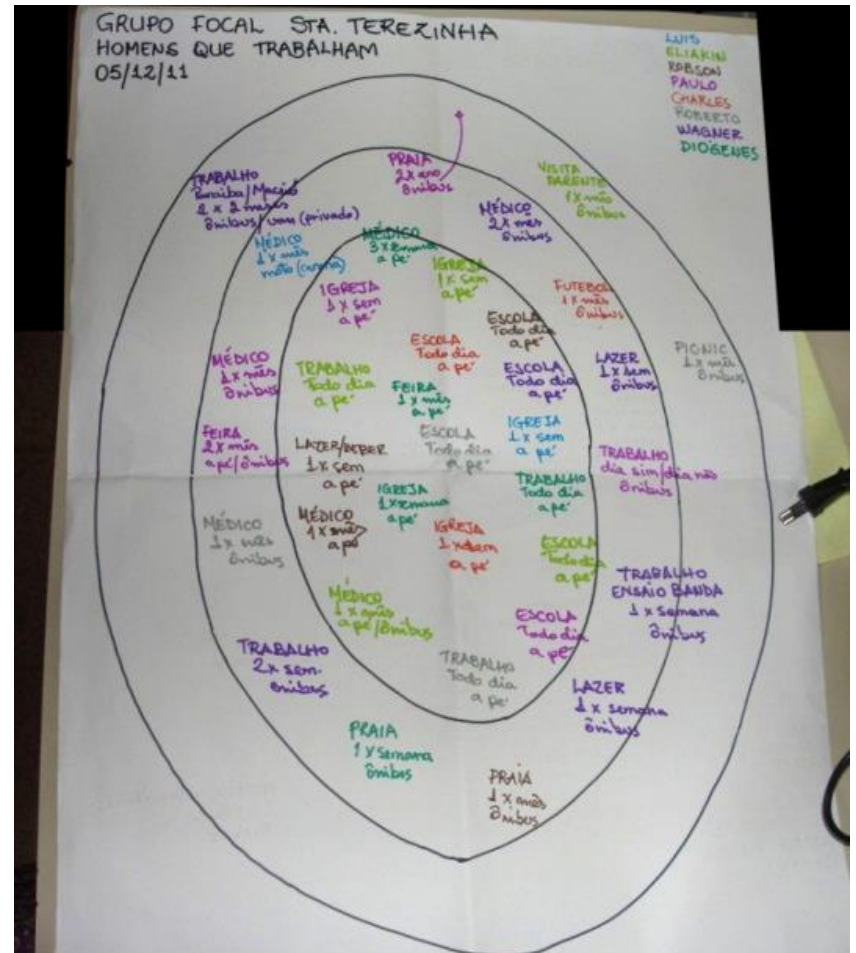
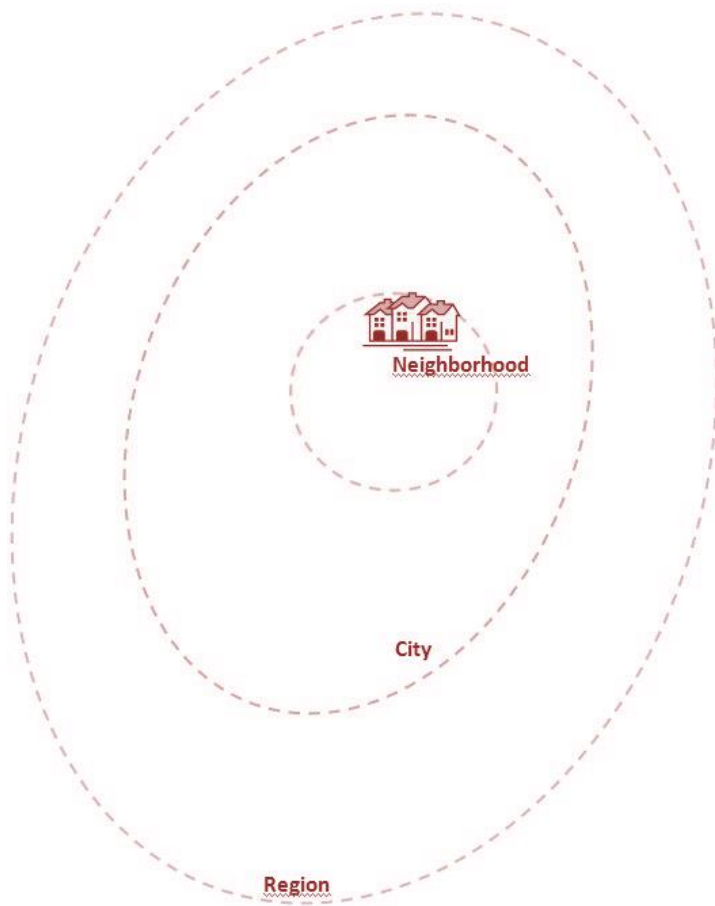


Figura 4: Densidade de pessoas por hectare – IBGE 2000.

# Focus group schematic mapping exercise





# Focus groups key concerns by area

## Coque

- Poverty is higher and local environmental conditions worse
- Very poor walking and close to dangerous main roads environments but this was not noted by the participants
- The area is near the CBD and everything is seen as accessible
- Most people don't tend to use public transport – walking is free!!
- People can easily visit friends and have leisure time on the beach
- Stigma of high crime means taxis won't come to the area for emergency trips

## St Terezinha

- Poverty is less and local environmental conditions better
- People noted poor pedestrian infrastructures
- It is easier to get to commercial areas in north than CBD
- It is more difficult to connect to the public transport network due to housing location
- People rely more on public transport to connect to work and other activities
- Formal taxis won't go up the hill to the altos
- People use free van service or informal mototaxis (US\$1) to take them up and down

# Focus groups mutual themes (1)

1. Public transport affordability is a major barrier to its use – especially for housewives and employed women

*“I walk to Cabanga. I earn R\$ 75,00 (US 32,5) per week, imagine how much I would spend on transport, paying fare, only to go for work every day?”*

2. People do not go to the CBD often and cannot afford to shop there when they do go

*“Once a month I take my son to the city centre to have a walk. We go by bus”*

3. People cannot afford to travel as a family - especially for recreation

*“I’m unemployed and I cannot go out for leisure with my husband and children because we would expend RS20.00 (\$10) only with transport fare”*

# Focus groups mutual themes (2)

4. Bus driver behaviour is a problem – especially for older people

*“The bus drivers don’t stop for older people because they don’t pay a fare and take longer to board”*

5. Informal mototaxis provide a very real alternative to public transport

*“An alternative to the bus, when we have to wait a lot, is to take a mototaxi”*

*“I take a mototaxi to go to the doctor and to the beach”*

6. But they also pose a very real threat to the pedestrian environment

*“The flow of motorbikes increases and the paths are full of stalls and it is dangerous for us because we have to walk on the street”*

# Conclusions

- It is a first study of transport and accessibility with low income residents in Recife (and maybe elsewhere in Brazil)
- Local people's perceptions of mobility and accessibility often do not correspond with (professionals) academics and policy makers views
- There are distortions in their articulated needs due to low economic insertion and participation levels and enclave activity patterns
- Residents are often 'blind' to their high levels of exposure to traffic, poor pedestrian environments and lack of access to activities.
- People want to stay where they are and do not want to relocate closer to new employment and other opportunities in the city
- This poses some fundamental problem for future transport and city planning in Recife – but also for related social planning (housing, health, education, etc.)

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Apoio



Patrocinadores

