

Sao Paulo has become a battlefield. A war emerged for the occupation of entire urban areas, for the infrastructure control, the institutions and the public spaces. The city is converted into an archipelago of modernized enclaves – with its corporate towers, malls and closed condominiums – surrounded by vast abandoned areas, vacant lands occupied by itinerant populations. Street vendors take the streets, slums continuously fill the available spaces between the highways, homeless communities install themselves under viaducts. As an informal tide, they overflow everywhere, conquering the interstitial spaces.

It is a no-man's land, an area of conflagration. A terminal landscape where modern constructions coexist with survival devices. War-machines cross these urban deserts. Street vendors' tents occupy the sidewalk. Camped groups on the crossings; under the viaducts. Popular malls appear in financial districts. Entire populations invade empty buildings in downtown and lands in city's periphery. It is a new economy, a new occupation modality of urban territory.

The most extreme forms of modernization co-exist with informal, transitory and clandestine new urban conditions generated by global integration.

The story to be told here follows the deep transformations, undergone during the last years, in the power relations and in the occupation forms of urban space in Sao Paulo. Transformations that have made new war-machines to take positions in this field of forces.

The war-machine is constituted by the specific way it occupies the space. It is an invention of the nomad who takes the territory through moving around it, through trajectories that distribute men and things in an open and indefinite space.

The war-machine operates out of the State apparatus and the corporate economy, out of restructuring and control devices of urban space.

The machine promotes a war without combat line, without neither front nor rear. Its model is whirling: it is a question of being distributed in an open space, occupying the territory, preserving the possibility of emerging in any point. Movement goes no longer from one point to another, still, it becomes perpetual, it has neither neither departure nor arrival.

It constitutes a smooth space, made of lines of movement and connections, contrarily to the striated metric space of State. It is a territory of small contact actions, tactual, more than visual action. Informal configurations that drain away and ooze, filling all the existing emptinesses. That is how the fluid occupies the space.

The nomad clashes against the city, a space striated by money, work and capital. But the city also liberates smooth spaces: the vacant lots, the voids created by implementation of urban infrastructure, the abandoned public spaces, the spans between constructions.

War-machines operate in these interstitial spaces that are secreted by the metropolis.

The nomad's procedure – homeless, street vendor, inhabitant of slums, migrant – is always **tactical**. It does not dispose of planning and coercion devices: its action is dictated by individual survival necessities. It instrumentalize everything he can reach: the street inhabitant uses taps of gas stations, the street vendor or the peddler appropriates part of the sidewalk, the inhabitant of the slum takes areas along and below highways and viaducts, and makes clandestine connections of the power. The entire **urban infrastructure is locally requested and redirected** to other uses.

The nomad is always producing weapons, creating war devices. They are survival instruments and equipment in the global city.

artifacts, vehicles, sale tents, architectures of precarious housing: paraphernalia to move around and to lodge oneself, a survival instrument to critical urban situations. They are improvised gadgets with the most diverse materials and techniques, dismantlable, transportable. They are proper to be quickly installed in any place. Armament to face fences and regulations, to occupy vacant or intensely active lands, to supply necessities of stay and circulation.

That is how informal commerce occupies squares and streets, how slum quarters take interstitial spaces – vacant lands, valleys and river banks, even urban infrastructure (viaduct spans and highway sides). How street inhabitants occupy sidewalks, marquees and buildings entrances with a transitory architecture made of blankets and of cardboard pieces. How paper-pickers establish reverse flows of a recycling alternative economy.

In opposition to the operations of the authoritarian apparatus, contemporary urban nomads develop prosthetic devices and counter-machines that allow the dispossessed to survive and to transform his conditions of existence. Urban nomads intend to develop tactical apparatuses against the strategic character of the politics of domination.

Nomadic politics consists in the development of tactical equipment: war-machines.



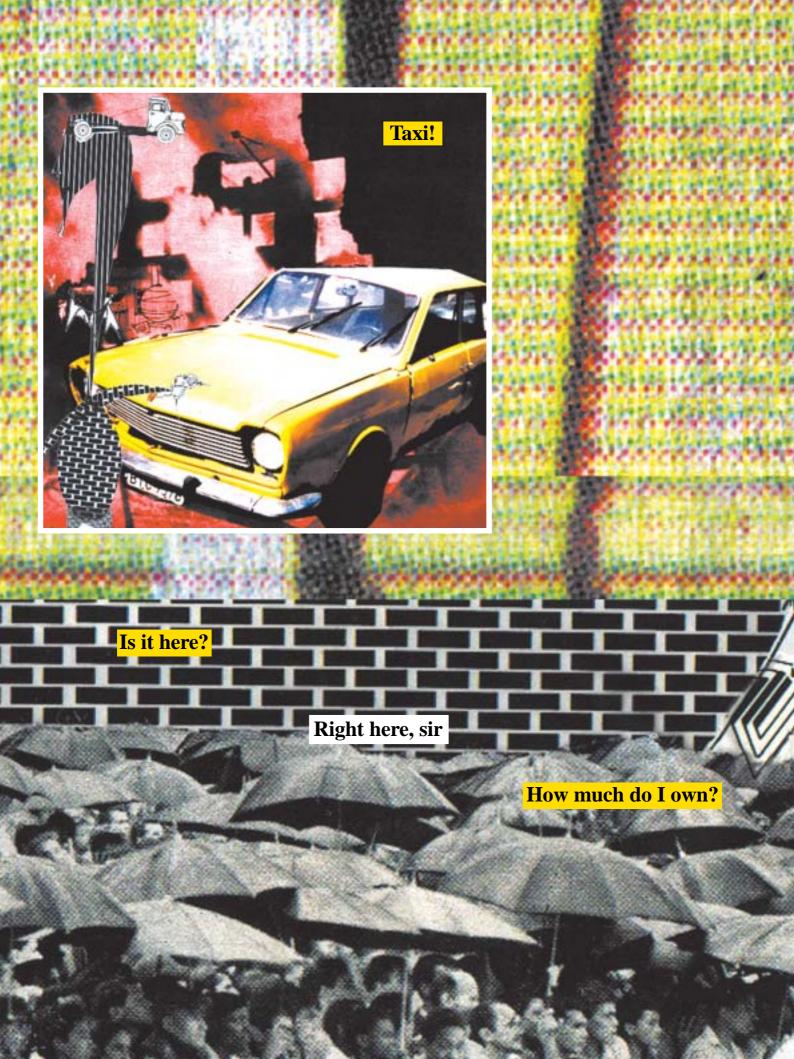
It means to create procedures and equipment for self-sufficiency under constant changing conditions. Urban nomads are the ones who engender the new urban conditions, the cities in mutation. It is all a logistic question, a means of economic survivering in the city – to collect, to keep, to load, to change, to sell, to shelter. These vehicles are instruments against urban restructuring apparatuses. They make evident the relations between urban redevelopment and population displacement, they facilitate urban space occupation by homeless people, they attack the image of urban coherence constructed through exclusion. Homeless is always presented as that one stationary who obstructs circulation. Their vehicles retaliate by having a new function: to answer to the movement needs of the excluded people. Its actions are operations of crossing, of border trespass – geopolitical and social, private and public borders.

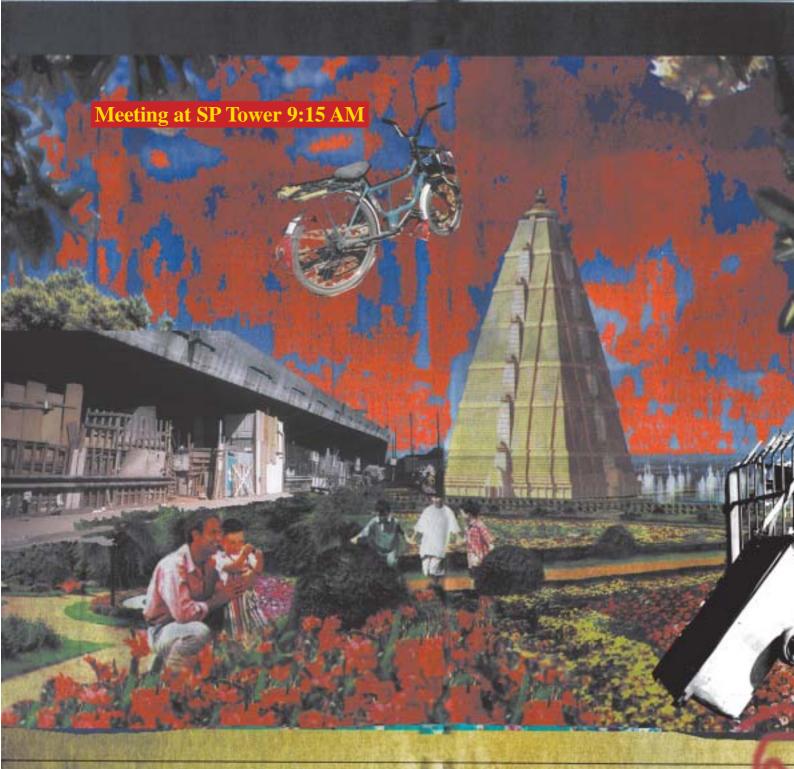
They aim at creating zones that are open territories in the intervals of the city's structured spaces.

Homeless populations overflow the traditional spatial limits established by social exclusion – distant outskirts and hillsides – to invade the whole city. They infiltrate into urban fabric fissures, into spans between constructions, into every single interstitial space.

They inhabit city's folds and fissures.

Infiltration is an operation to reconquer urban territory, it is performed against administrative regulations and against capital excluding urbanization. Maneuvers of urban guerrilla: homeless people deviate from obstacles and penetrate through other clefts, they constantly re-invent new economies and occupation tactics. Their battle formations and maneuvers constitute a genuine war operation. Their attacks consist in surrounding and invading the spaces, in cutting communication channels and in establishing lines of flights.



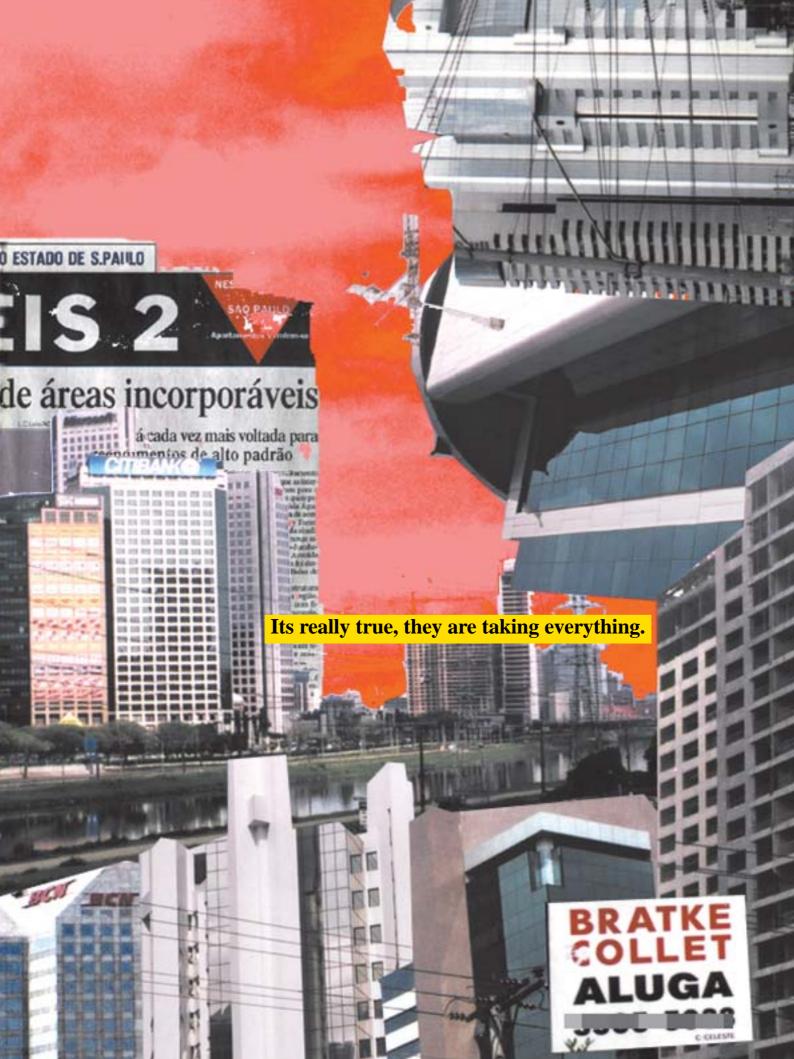


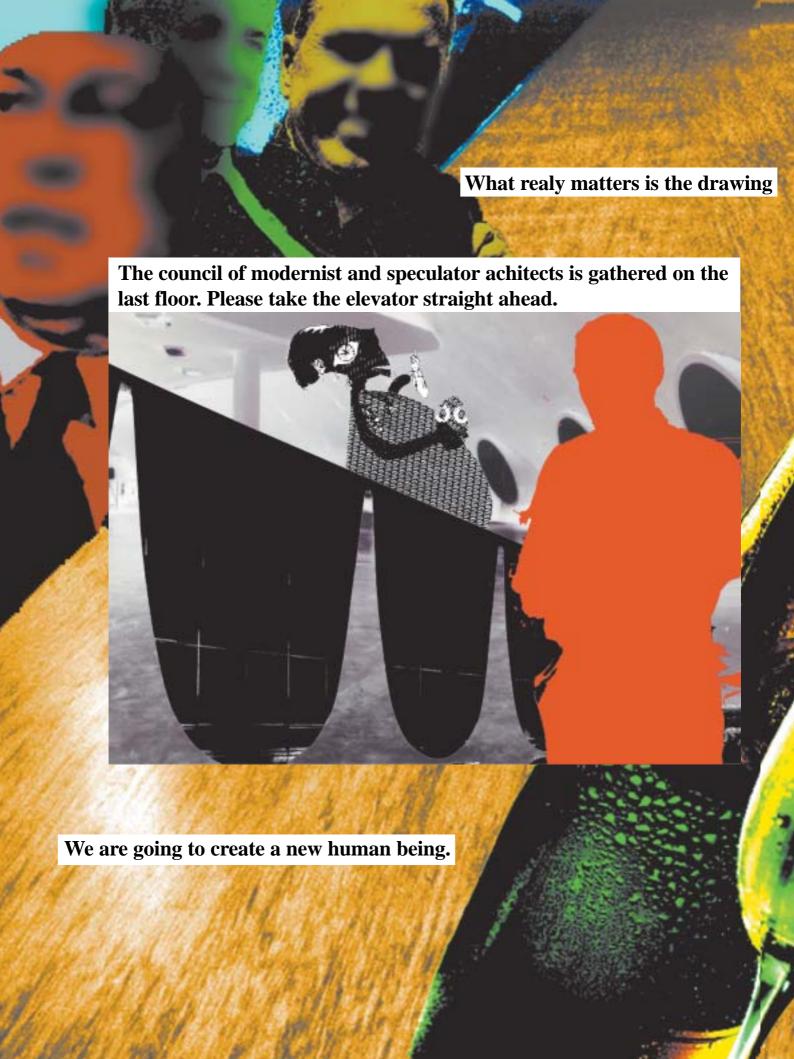
A qualidade de vida vai mude para o centro de São Paul



Parque Shopping Centro de exposições e convenções Empregos



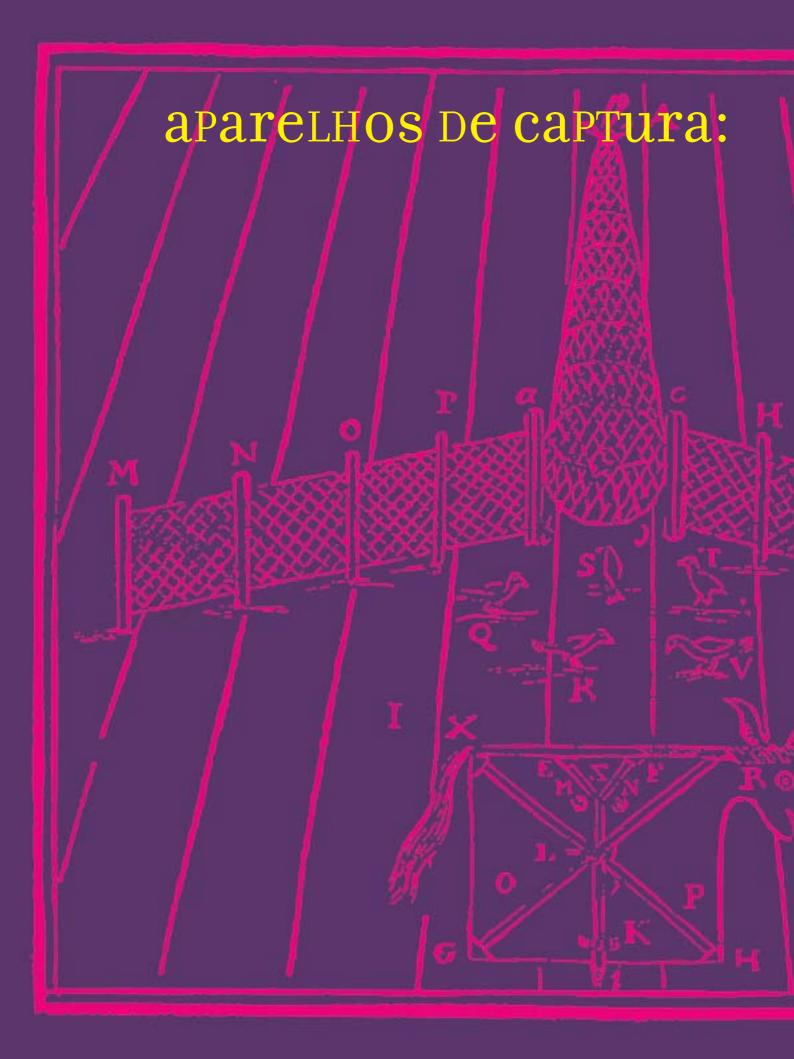












controlar o nomadismo

Capture apparatuses are formed to appropriate war-machines. Their function: to striate space, to control nomadism. To institute a capture process of the fluxes. State apparatus fixes trajectories in strictly determinate directions so that they limit the speed and measure movements in detail. State does not cease to decompose movement and to regulate speed.

It is the fortress model: each time there is a destabilization operation, an emergence of new nomadic potential, the apparatus response consists of striating the space against all threat of invasion or overflow. Therefore, fences, closed condominiums, delimited areas to informal commerce, practices of removing homeless populations.

Architecture is, generally, a capture apparatus.

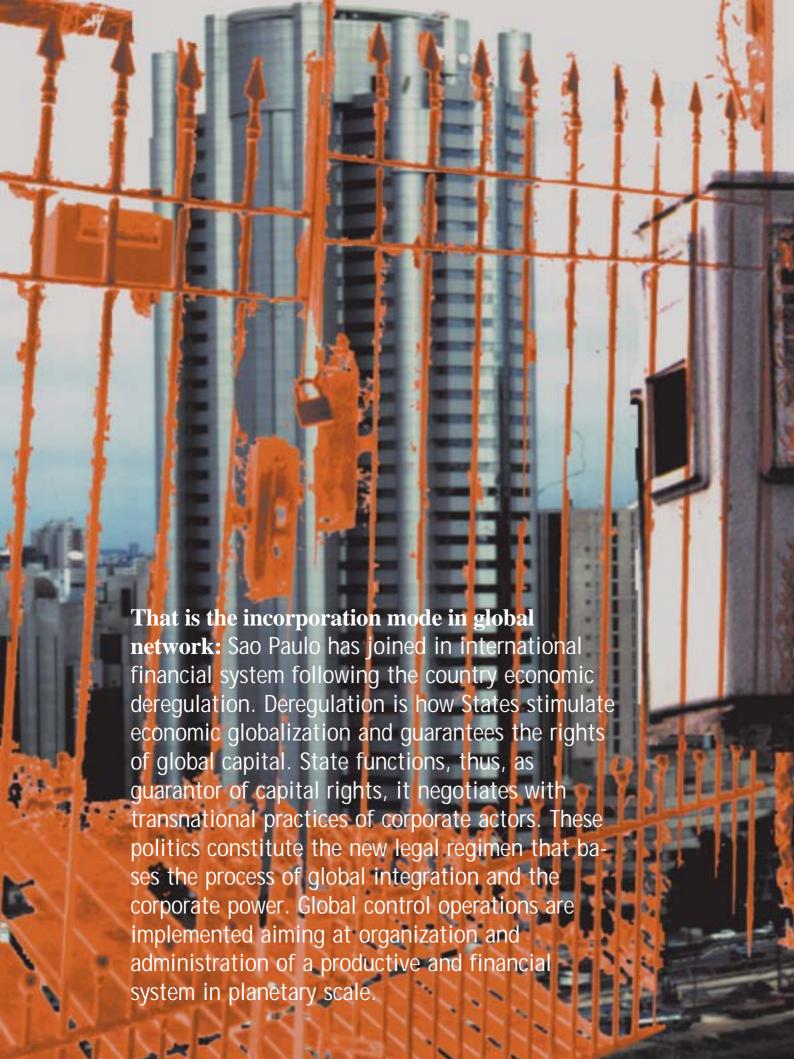
In global capitalism, however, based in financial fluxes and speculative processes, circulation is generalized pouring over borders, over structuring devices, over forms of work organization. Everything is defined in terms of trade value, everything is merchandise. Individuals' productive power is organized in accordance with devices of mobilization and/or segregation. Informal economy, paper-picking activity, occupation of empty buildings by homeless people – everything is made of operations in the inward of global capitalist society dynamics.

The strategic role of large urban centers in global restructuring process turns the city itself into an object of appropriation. Transnational economy generates new claims on the city. Claims from both the global capital that uses the city as organizational base and the excluded sectors. Both sides advocate contradictory rights on the urban space.

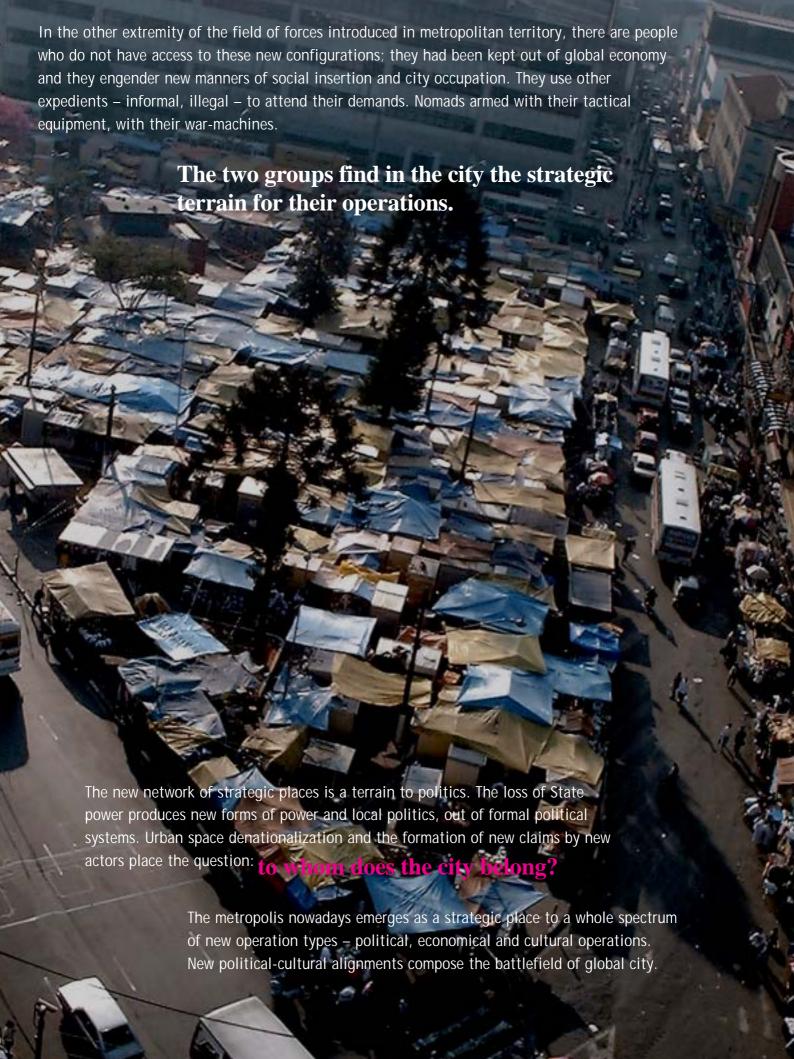
The city becomes the battlefield of war-machines against capture apparatuses.

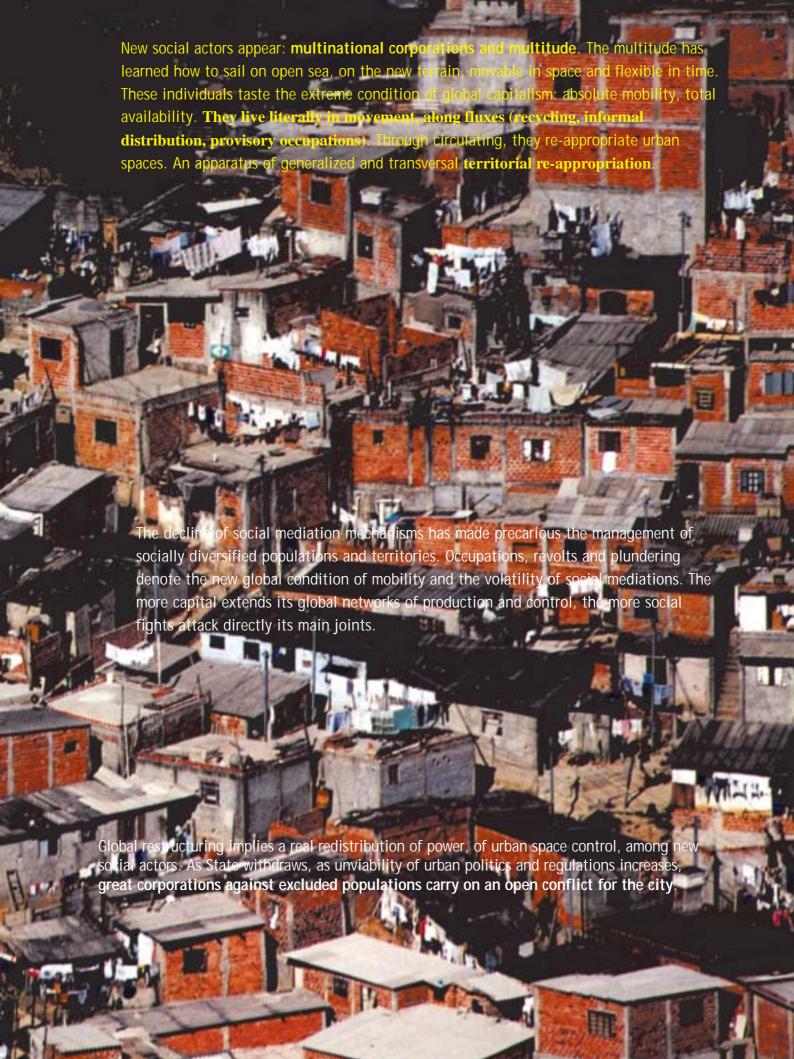
Global cities imply new forms of territorial centering. They are zones of great economic power concentration and of command centers in international economy. Here is where global control system is implemented: cities are transformed into operational headquarters, service and financing centers of the new international order. These enclaves are transnational strategic spaces anchored in metropolises.

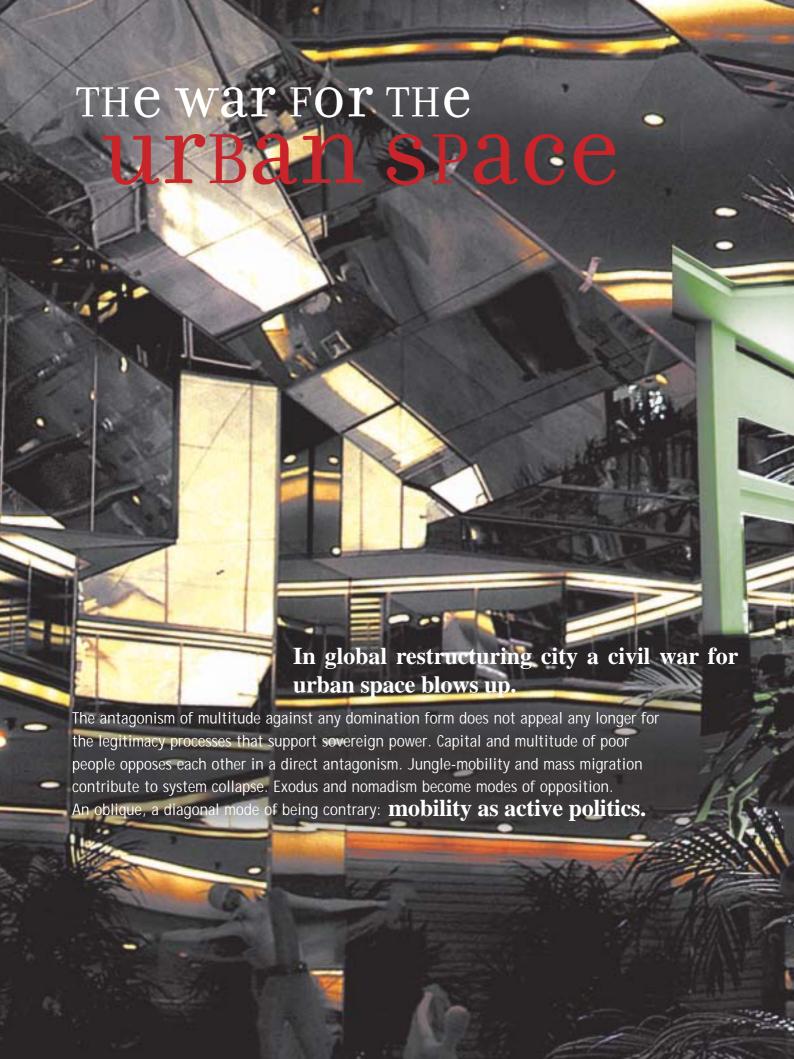
State's role decline corresponds to the reduction of nation regulation capacity over key sectors of their economy. Globalization has transformed governing spaces of economies. Electronic fluxes exceed jurisdictions and conventional borders. Global cities – emergent transnational urban systems – have become places to implement governing mechanisms in global economy.





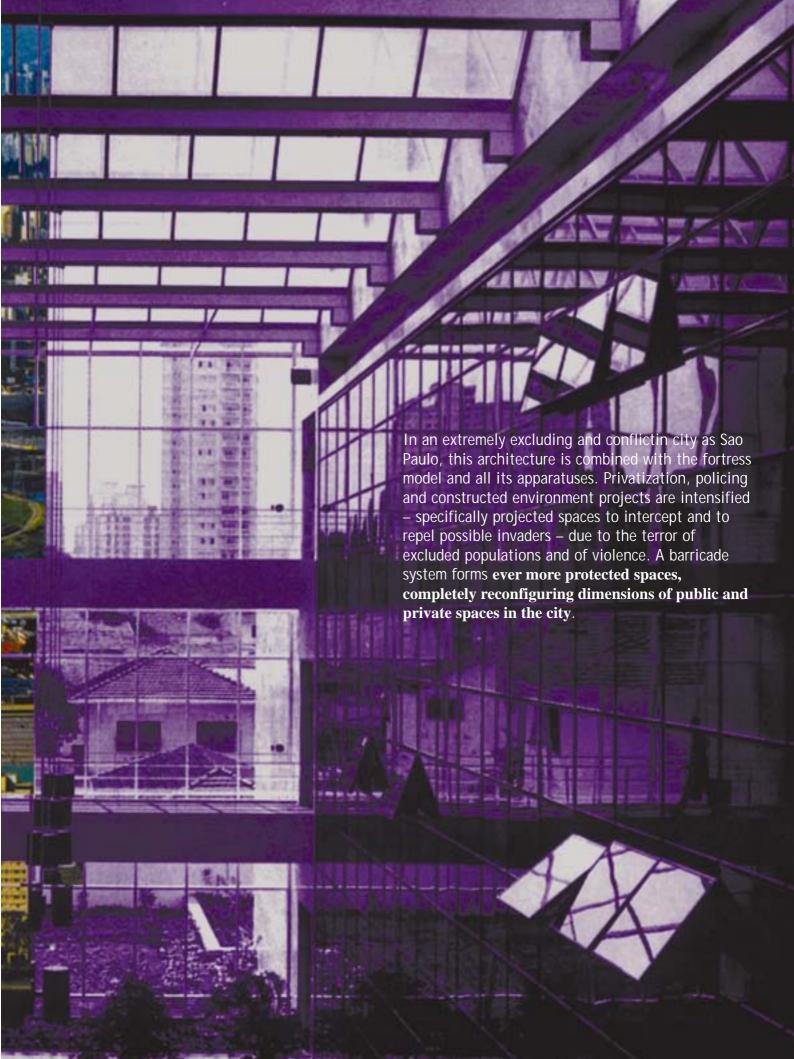












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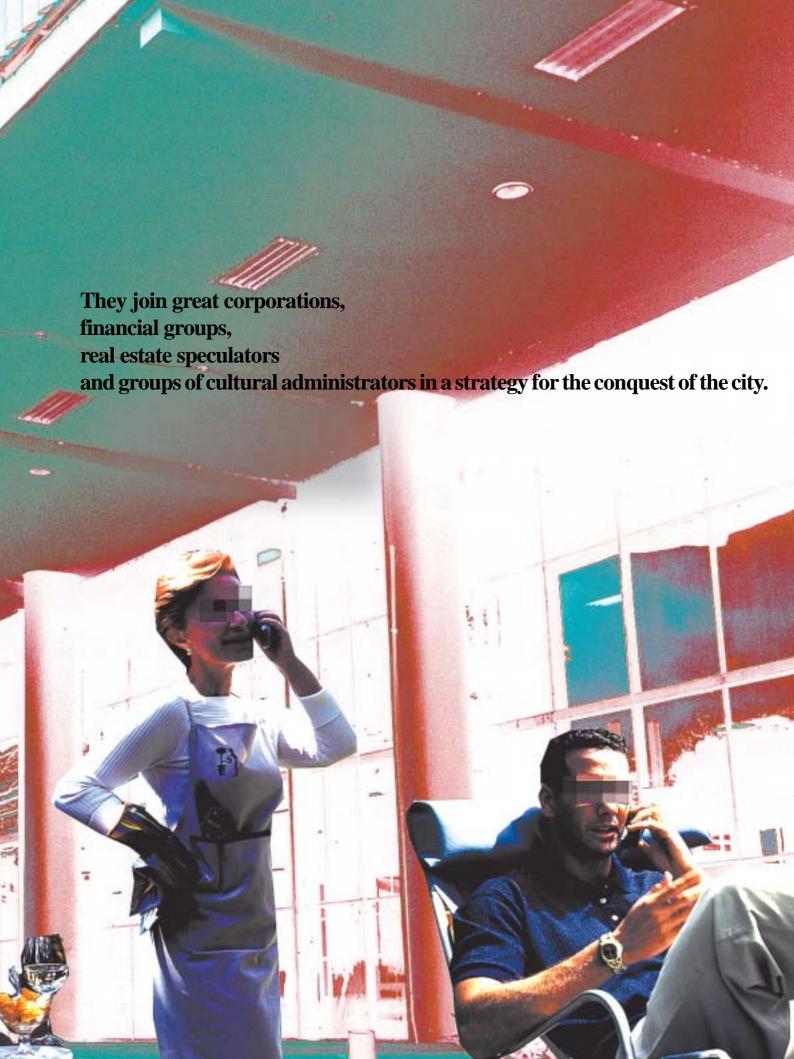
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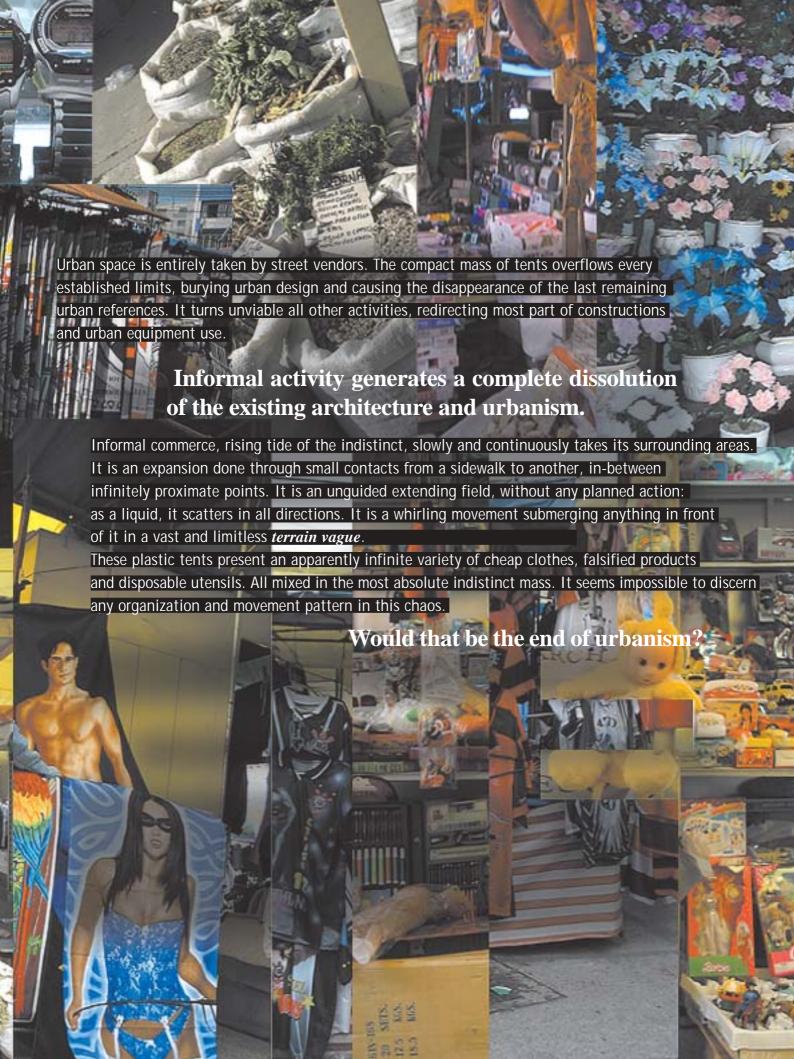
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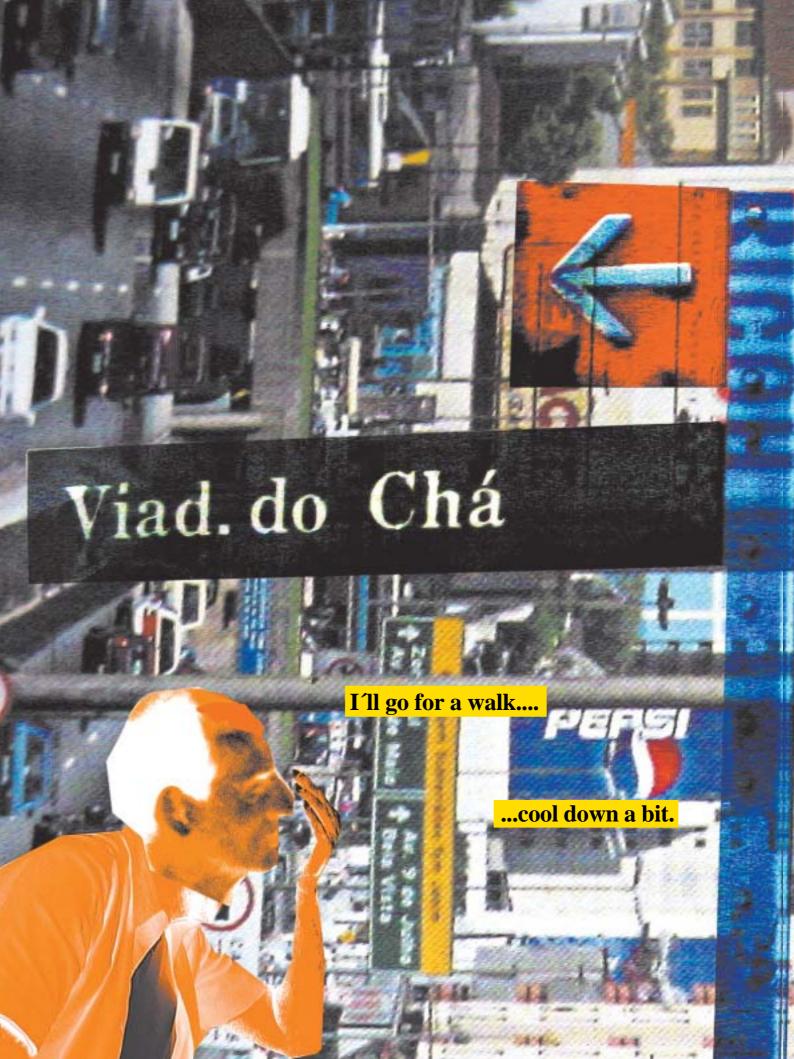










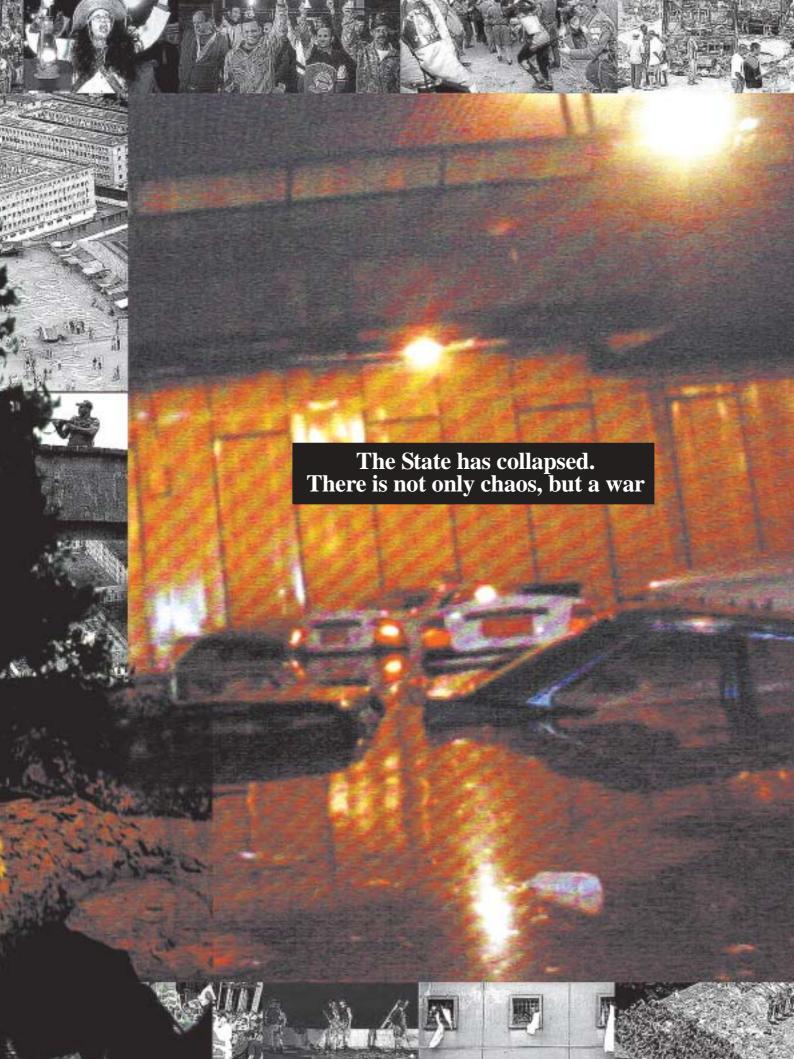


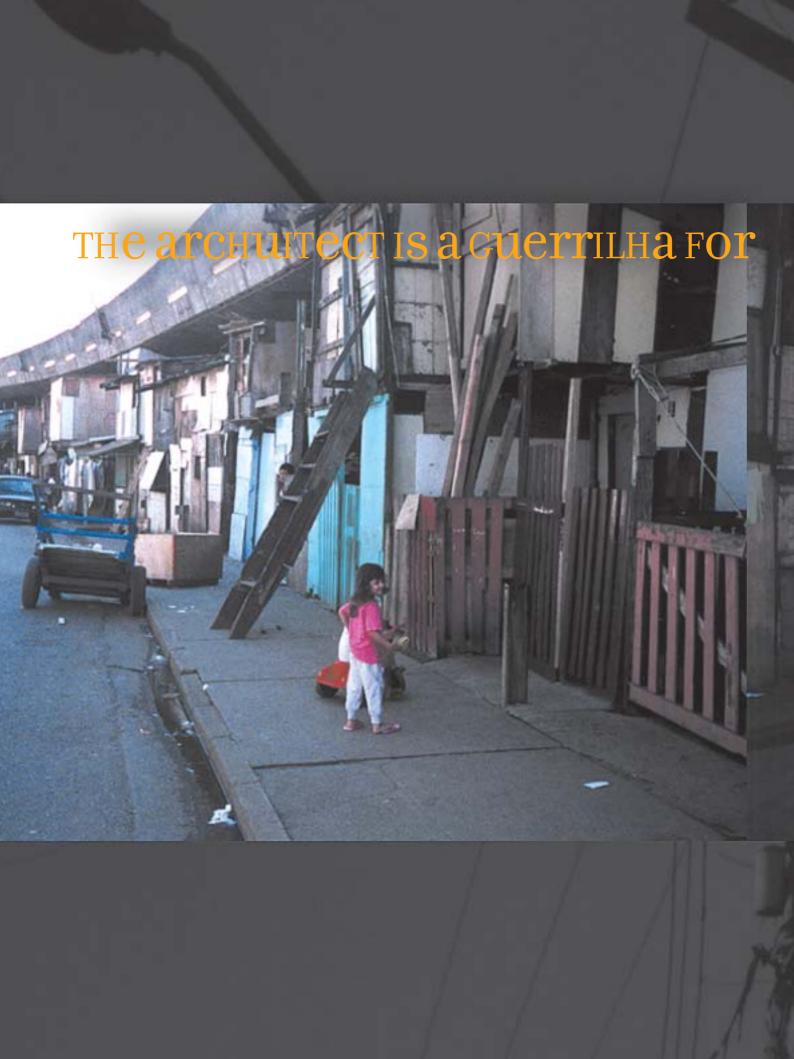


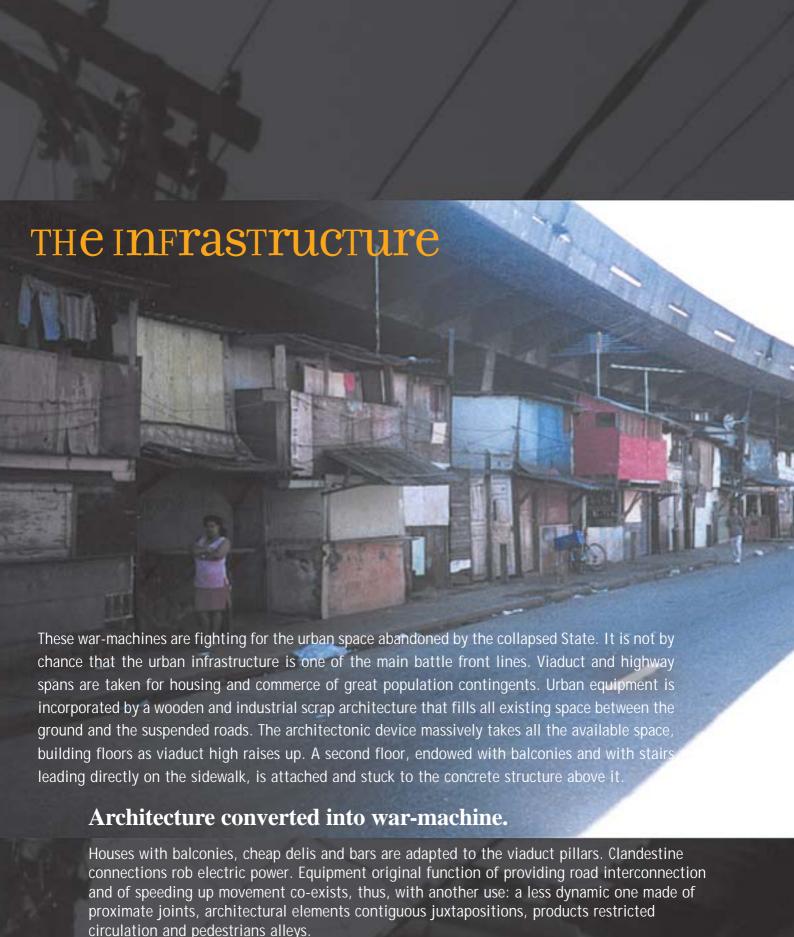
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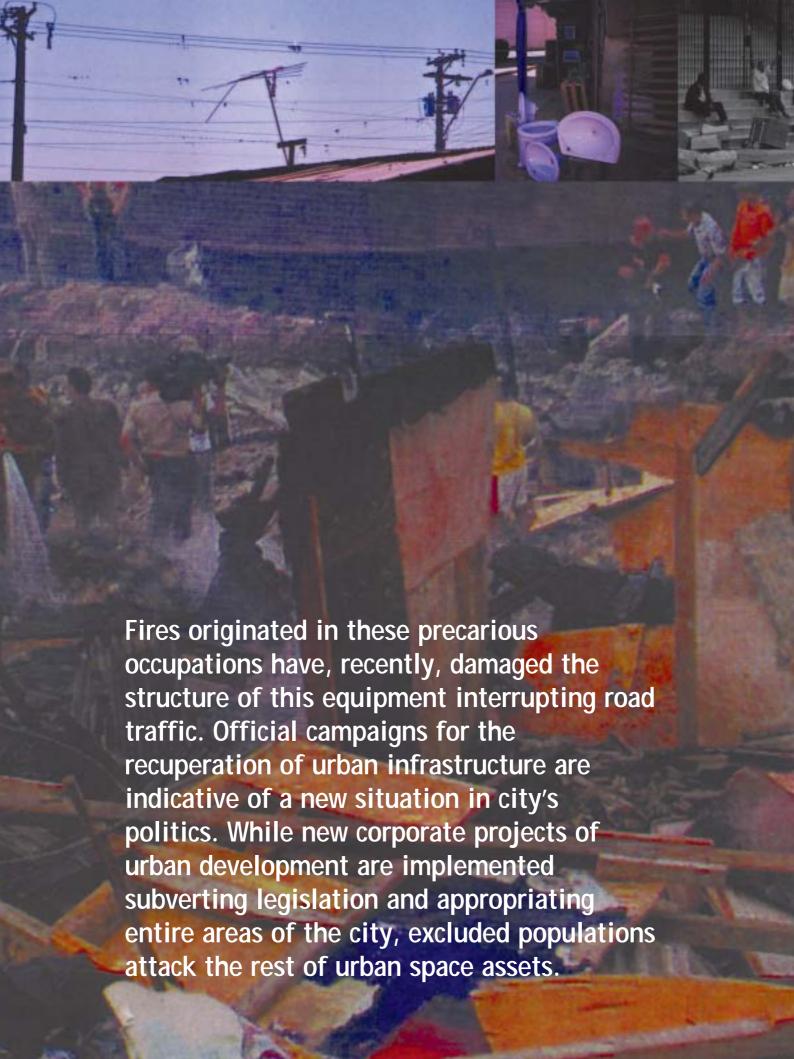
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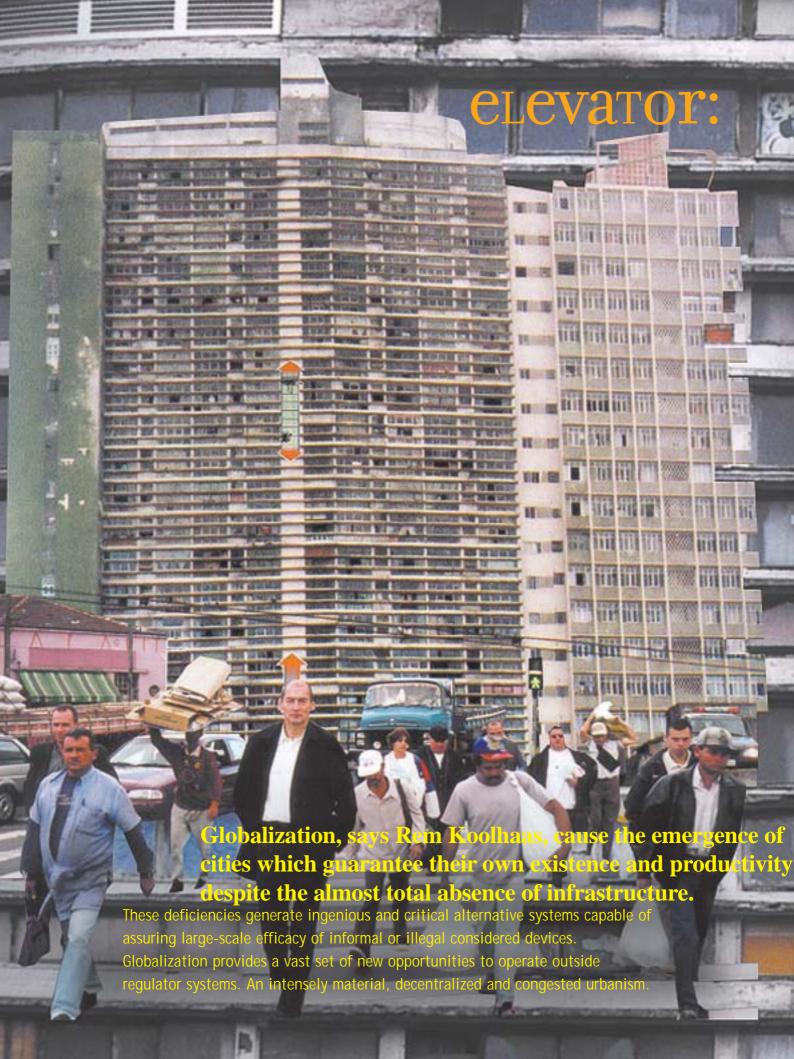












infrastructural weapon

Street vendors, deposits of recyclable materials, informal commerce and provisional housing occupy the limits of private property and of urban infrastructure. Highway sides, spaces under viaducts, ramps and railroad channels are colonized by diverse kinds of commerce, services offering and housing. There is a literal annexation of the urban transport infrastructure by these devices of land appropriation. Informal market adapts road infrastructure in order to extract the greatest possible use from it. Different levels of economic activity, in increasing interaction and institutionalization, are developed in these interstitial spaces.

Informal urbanization obeys a different and more efficient logic than that of infrastructural implementation.

Part of the infrastructure becomes real estate property, detours imposed on circulation redirect the established infrastructure to other places and uses. The slower movement indicates the collapse of road system created by urban design. Streets are replaced by barriers and dead ends that control isolated areas. Highways transformed into accesses for local configurations. Dysfunctional elements of urban transport infrastructure, now creating difficulties to circulation, are then recuperated as programmed interstices.

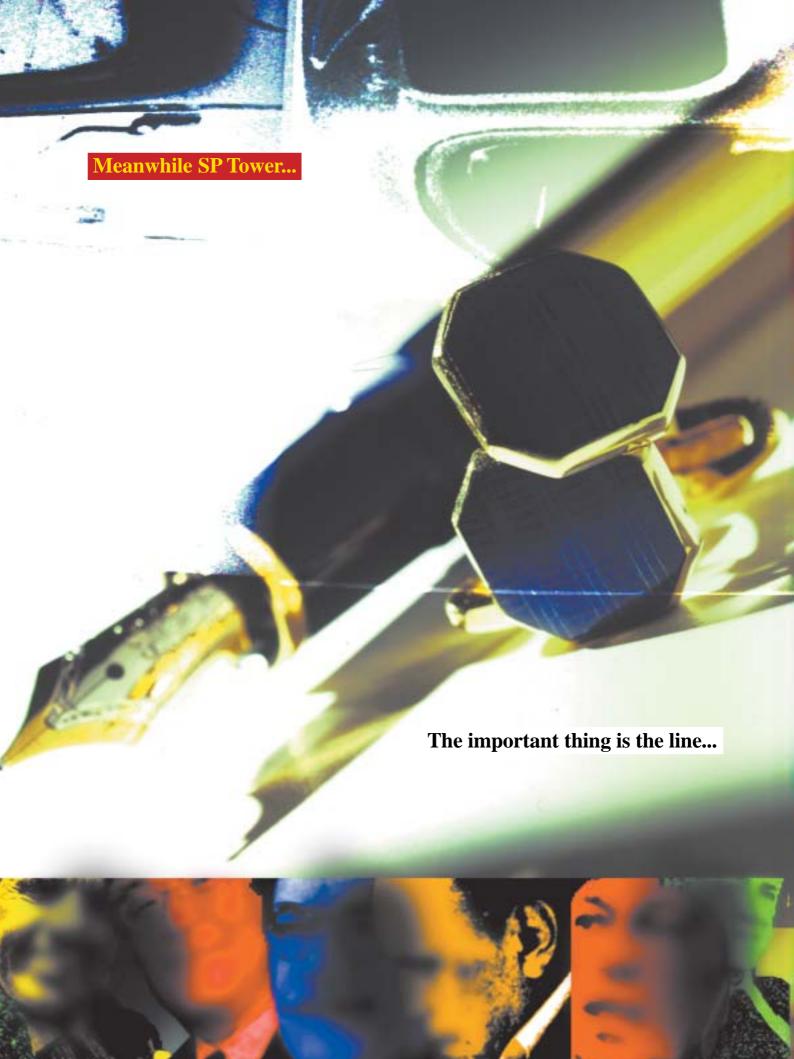
In global city, infrastructure is implemented in accordance with new restructured corporate areas. Equipment, at first integrated in a totalizing mode, becomes more and more competitive and local. Instead of networks, the new infrastructure creates enclaves. It is a capture apparatus. It no longer attends to needs, but it is a strategic weapon of dominant urbanism: a new system of subway is constructed in a predetermined area to give the impression that other one is old and congested.

However, infrastructure may also be used as war-machine. The architect operates tactically, searching manners of occupying and redirecting infrastructure.

He invents programs to guarantee the maximum use of the existing equipment. He is obsessed with the manipulation of infrastructure, aiming at infinite intensifications and diversifications, interruptions and redistributions. A new urbanism pointed to the irrigation of territories endowed with potential, to the creation of fields able to accommodate processes that refuse to be crystallized in definitive forms.



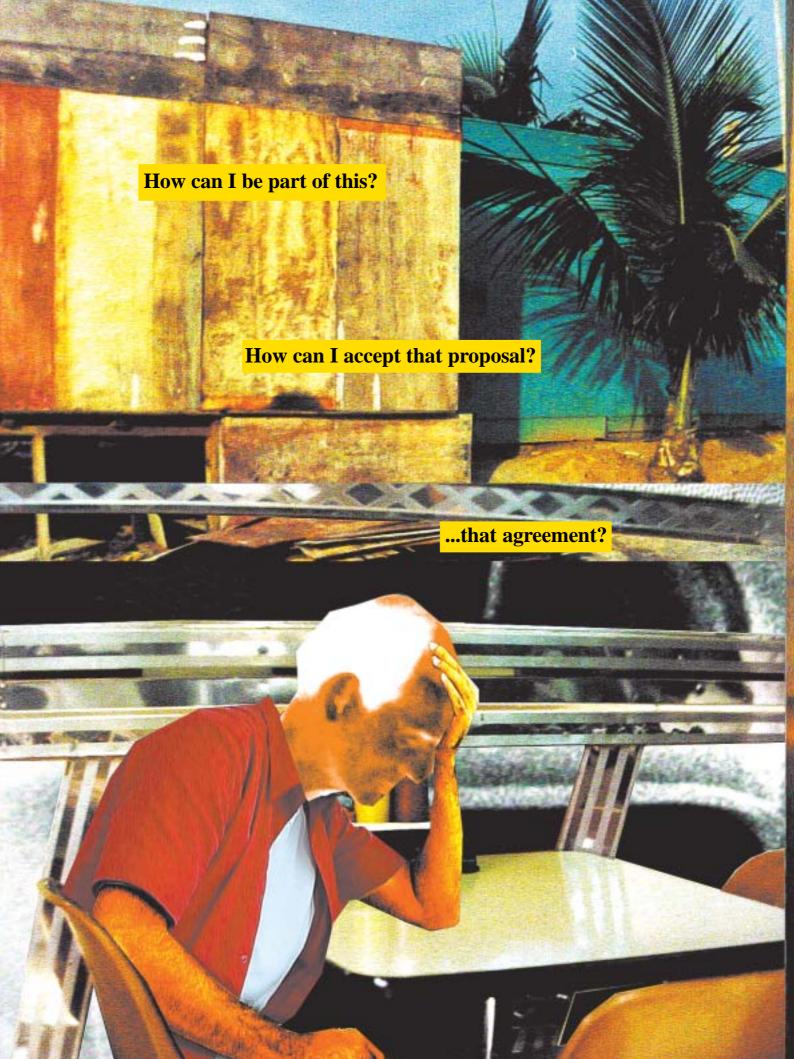


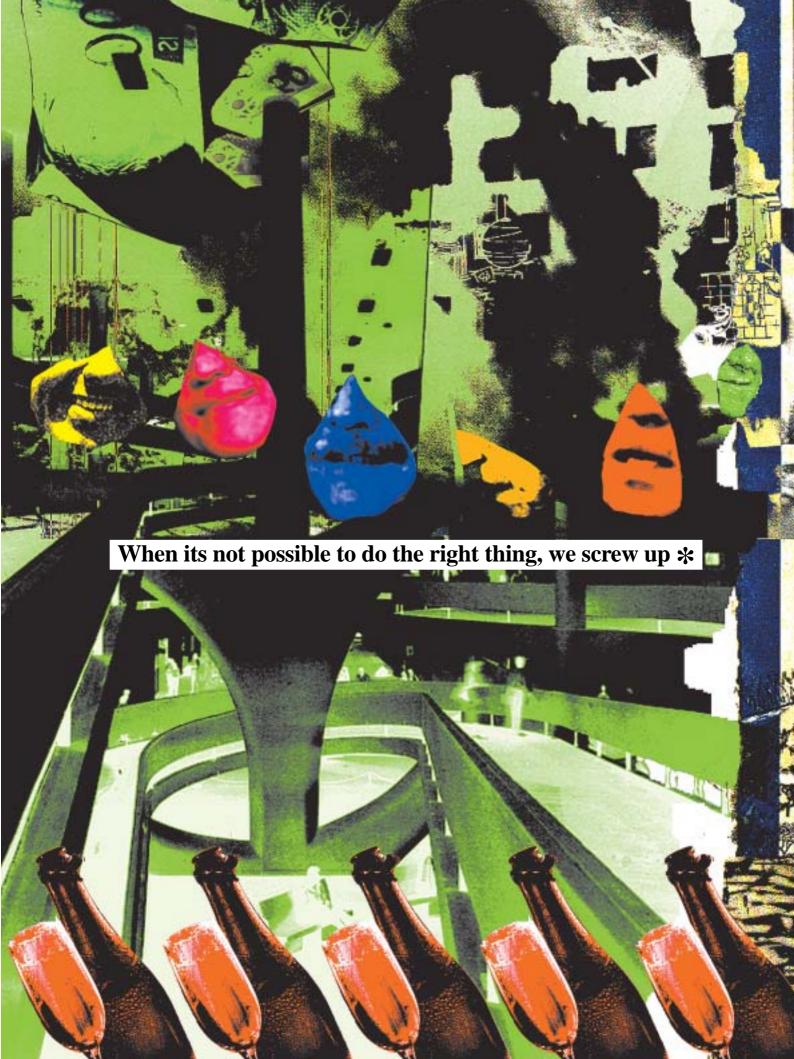


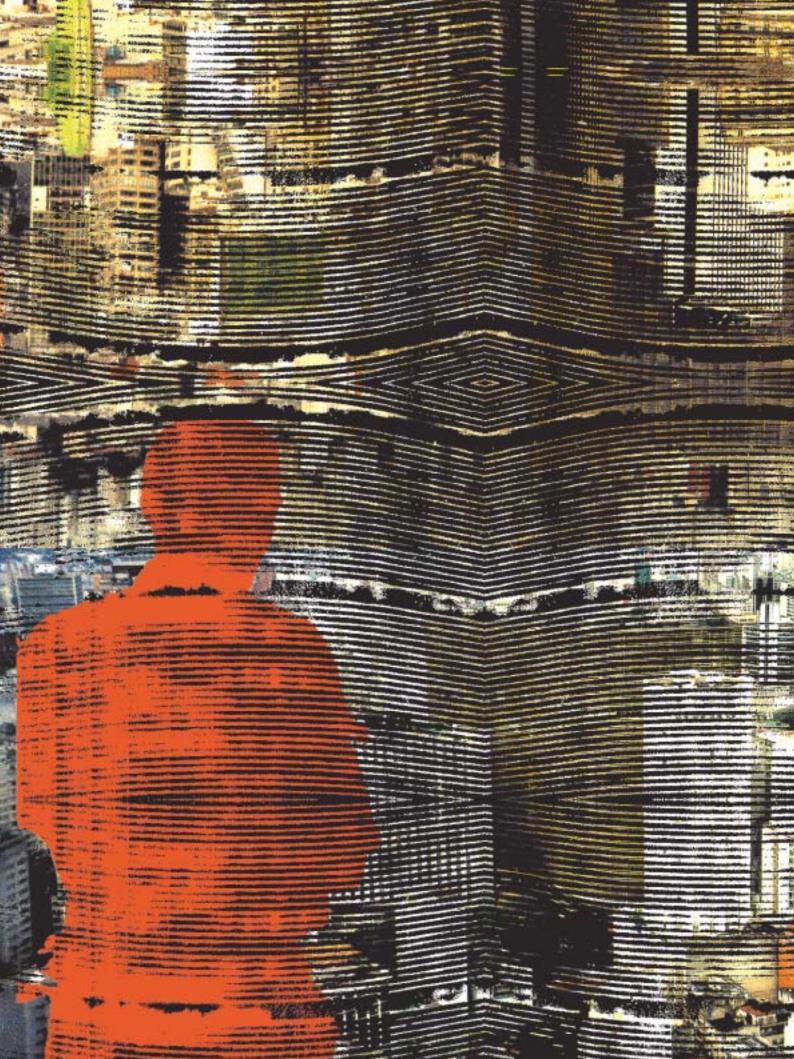


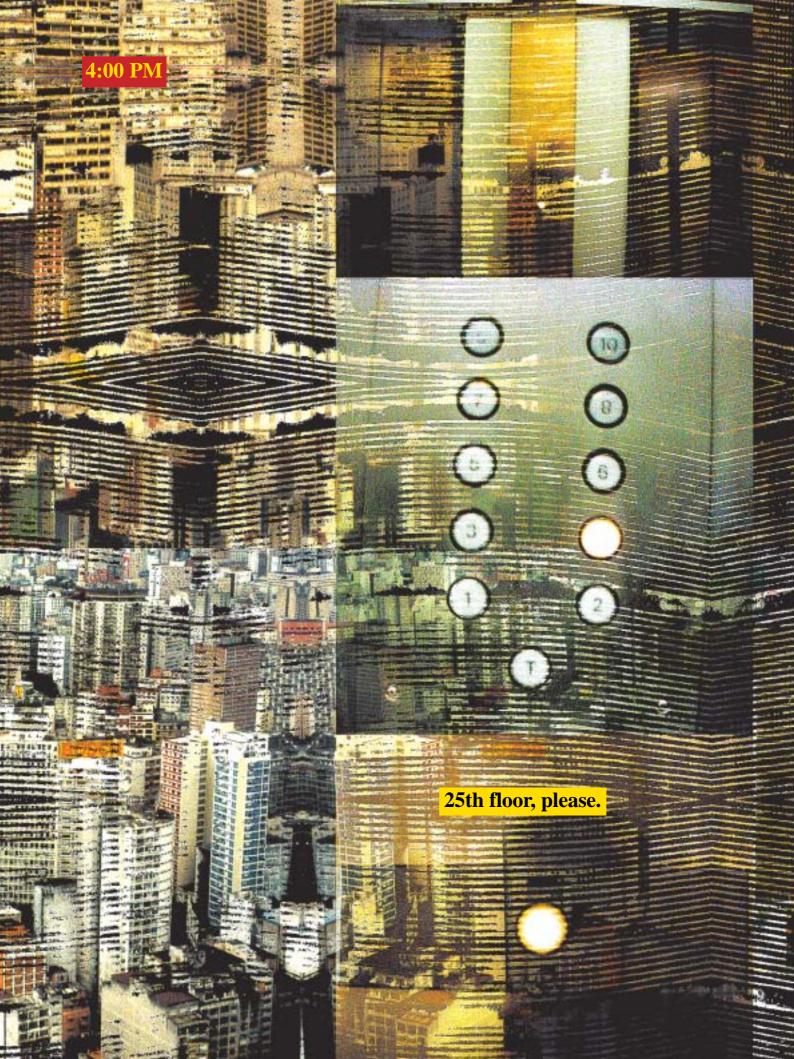






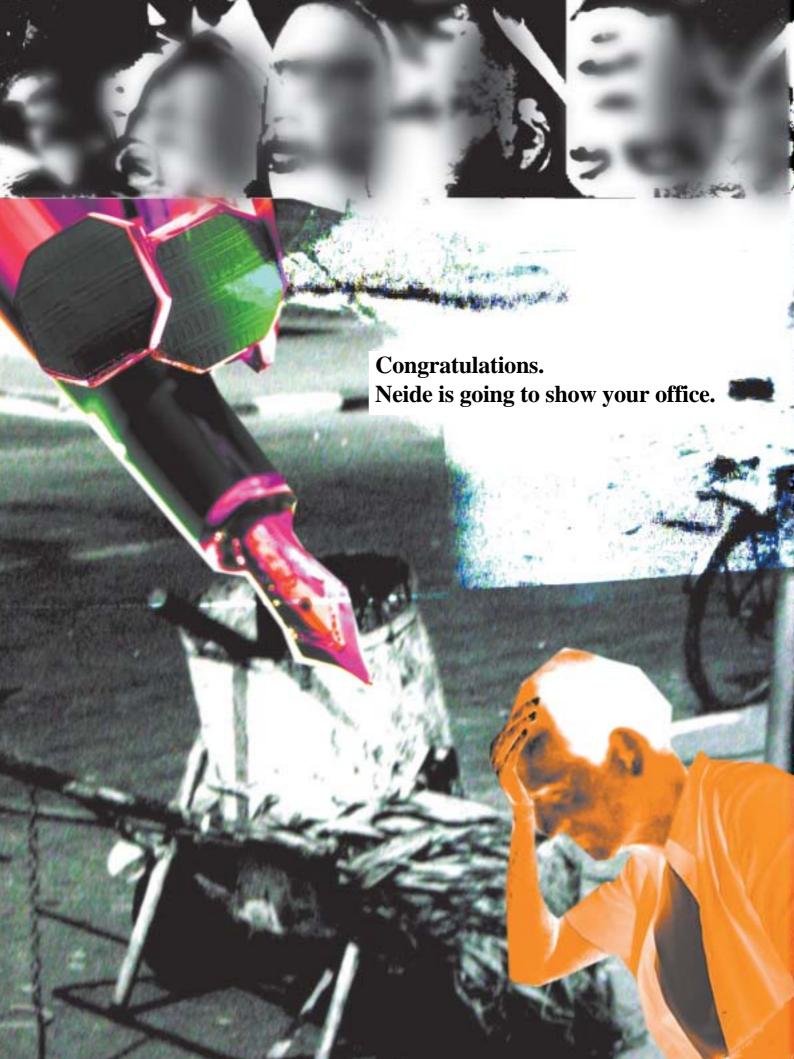














THE WAR-MACHINES AGAINST THE CAPTURE APPARATUS

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The frase "When it is not possible to do the right thing... we screw up", is from the Brazilian film "O bandido da luz vermelha", directed by Rogério Sganzela, de 1968.

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English version by Andréia Moassab.

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