



# Lane Splitting: The Death Defying Motoboys of São Paulo



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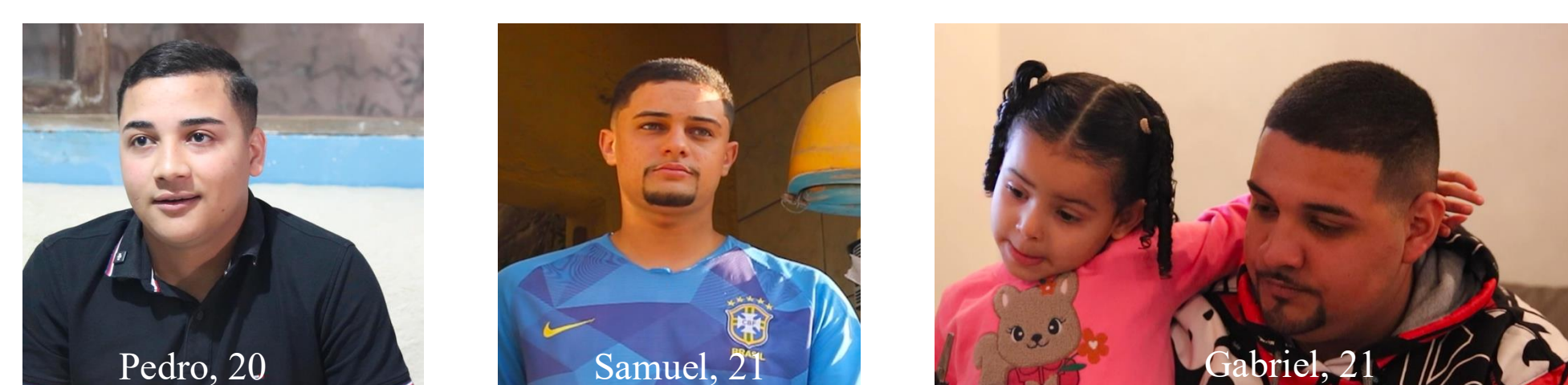
## Abstract

In São Paulo, Brazil, more than 200,000 motoboys, or motorcycle couriers, navigate congested streets to deliver food, documents, and countless other goods that keep the city moving. Their work is essential, yet they are stigmatized, underpaid, and exposed to some of the most dangerous traffic conditions in the world. *Lane Splitting* is an investigative documentary that sheds light on their daily struggles and resilience. The film draws directly on testimony from motoboys themselves, capturing their voices and exploring the realities of their everyday lives. It examines how multinational delivery platforms such as Uber and iFood profit from this workforce while offering little protection or security, leaving workers to bear the risks. Through conversations with motoboys, union leaders, and policy experts, the documentary reveals how corporate practices and government neglect intersect to endanger lives. By centering those most often overlooked, *Lane Splitting* challenges audiences to recognize the human cost of modern efficiency and reflect on the inequalities that shape global urban life.

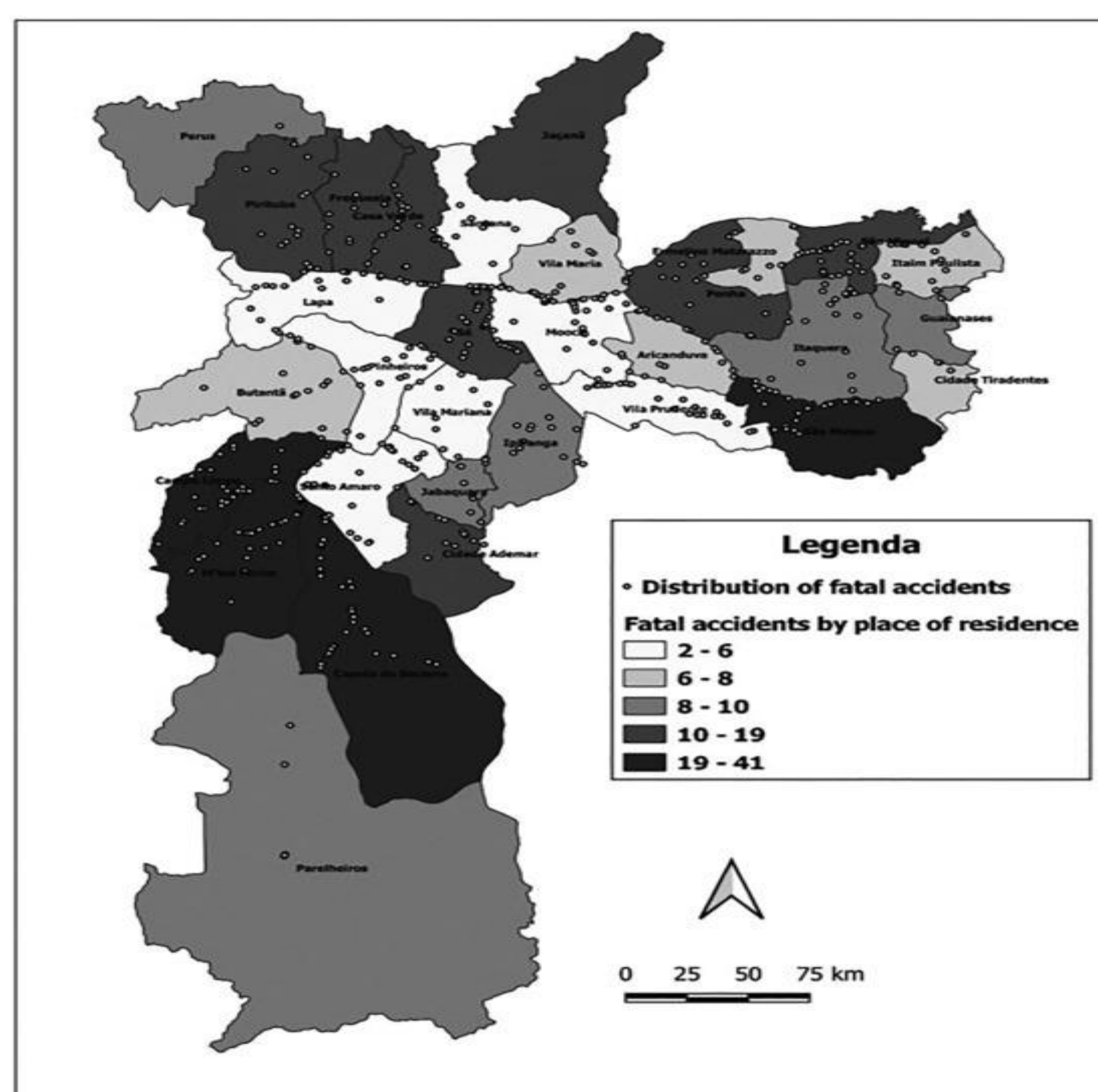
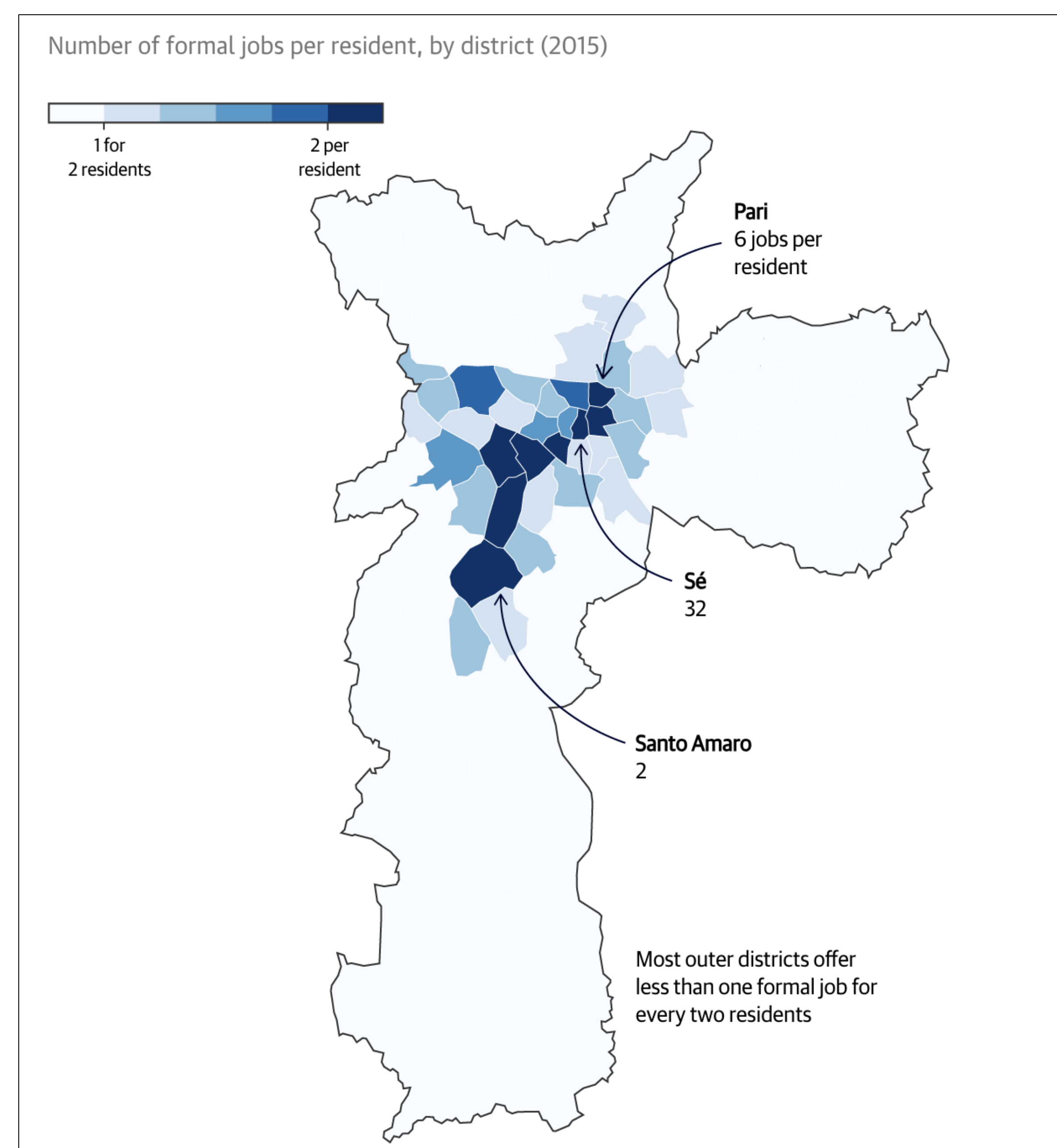
## Methodology

Over summer, I lived in a peripheral community of São Paulo, interviewing motoboys and those who study the profession.

Motoboys:



Professors:



## Findings

This project reveals how São Paulo's motoboys and the rise of iFood reflect a global shift toward platform capitalism, turning mobility, labor, and convenience into profit while stripping workers of rights, safety, and ultimately their humanity.

### 1. Mobility Crisis as Profit Engine

São Paulo's failing public transport system and overpopulation makes movement itself a commodity. The city's divestment in mobility benefits private companies, forcing workers to shoulder the risks of keeping the city moving.

### 2. Peripheral Inequality and Lack of Options

In São Paulo's periphery, limited job opportunities leave young men few choices. Delivery work becomes a survival strategy, where many have no other options.

### 3. Apps Exploiting a Crisis

Gig platforms capitalize on unemployment and instability, selling the illusion of independence. iFood and Uber trap workers by convincing them they can "be their own boss", while subjecting them to unsafe, low-paid, unprotected labor.

### 4. Precarious Work, Real Danger

Motoboys face long hours, minimal labor protections, constant physical risk, and low wages (\$0.60 – \$1 minimums). Every accident, delay, or illness falls on the worker, not the company who is pushing them to go faster and faster.

### 5. Convenience Built on Exploitation

A society addicted to instant delivery masks the human cost behind each order. Every button press for food or goods hides the exhaustion and injuries of those making it possible, while many view the motoboys as a nuisance on the roads.

### 6. A Global Pattern of Exploitation

São Paulo mirrors a worldwide labor crisis where corporations turn inequality into opportunity. Platform capitalism thrives on crisis and a lack of opportunity, and the motoboys' struggle puts a face to it.

## Access the Documentary

Instagram

(Where updates will be posted)



YouTube

(Where documentary will be posted)



Trailer

