

URBAN ADVERTISING CONTROL IN COMMERCIAL STREETS: THE CASE OF OSCAR FREIRE STREET

Alina Gonçalves SANTIAGO. Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina.

Camila Faccioni MENDES. Universidade de São Paulo.

Heliana Comin VARGAS. Universidade de São Paulo.

Vanessa CASARIN. Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina.

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ABSTRACT

This paper intends to discuss the impact over urban landscape as a result of urban interventions, having as focus the “Clean City Law” implemented in Oscar Freire Street, in São Paulo City, whose main characteristic is the luxury commerce. To achieve this goal it will be presented some urban visual communication aspects related to these interventions; the street retail specificities; and the objectives of Clean City Law. The users and local retailers perception will confirm the necessity to consider the place peculiarities to make urban projects good and efficient.

INTRODUCTION

The environmental quality of an urban space involves, among others, the visual quality, which is related to its aesthetic quality or pleasantness of a given environment and its landscapes to the user who perceives it. Certain landscapes are sources of pleasure and have influenced programs and policies to protect the aesthetics of the environment.

The contemporary citizens have seen in their cities the proliferation of visual signs and symbols in the form of commercial advertisements for various purposes, leading to what has been called “urban visual pollution”. These effect according to several researchers significantly affects the pleasantness of commercial spaces and culminated in the adoption of the “Clean City Law” (Law 14223/06), which standardizes indicative ads and prohibits the exploitation of visible advertising in the public space (includes those installed in private lots). In this law, the urban advertising in public space may be exploited only under a concession from the City Hall throughout a public-private partnership, and in specific street furniture (not yet

implemented). This legislation promoted a significant change in the landscape of São Paulo. However, research (NASAR 1988, 1997; MINAMI, 2001; MENDES & VARGAS 2002; CASARIN, 2007) addressing the pleasantness of places regarding their visual appearance show that commercial advertisements are just one part of the visual aspect of landscapes. Other aspects considered important to the aesthetic quality of places are the presence of vegetation, cleaning and maintenance of both the ads and buildings and the urban space, the presence of wide, open spaces, the historical relevance of city spaces and order and organization of these spaces (NASAR, 1988; 1997).

The case study presented here is the Oscar Freire Street, which runs through affluent neighborhoods in the region known as Jardins, in São Paulo. It is characterized and even internationally known for offering an upscale commerce of the most recognized brands. Oscar Freire Street is currently considered an important outdoor shopping center to the luxury market and can be compared to other places with similar function over large cities in the world, like Milan, Paris, Tokyo and New York. It ranked as the eighth most luxurious street in the world¹, is the most emblematic example of how urban space and commercial activity give São Paulo a status of globalized city.

Although it follows very specific patterns regarding the inclusion of this commerce in the urban space and the exploration of visual communication, it is the result of the historical context of urban development and commerce in the city of São Paulo.

In 2006 was promoted in the Oscar Freire Street a redevelopment in a stretch of highest concentration of stores driven by the Traders Association of Oscar Freire Street in a public-private partnership where measures have been implemented such as the installation of underground electrical wiring, the reform of sidewalks, planting ornamental trees and increased supply of street furniture.

In 2007, there was in the city of São Paulo the implementation of the Clean City Law (Law 14,223/2006), which “provides for the ordering of the elements that make up the urban landscape of São Paulo”.

After the implementation of the two interventions and the results observed, it is important to understand their ranges and limits concerning the urban landscape having

¹ROMERO, Katiane (www.elle.abril.com.br/materia/historia-oscar-freire)

as a support the urban communication theoretical aspects, the retailing science and the users and local retailers perception.

These procedures can help to understand if the main retailing demands were observed; which actions were made by retailers in order to minimize negative impacts over the sales; and if the laws goals were the same of local retailers and users.

URBAN ADVERTISING AND ITS SPECIFICS

The “urban advertising”, visible from the public space, involves concepts of visual communication; which goal is to communicate something that is perceived by the sense of sight. This type of communication can be as old as human civilization itself (MUNARI, 2001; MENDES, 2006).

According to Munari (2001) almost all of what you see is visual communication. How does the individual visually perceive the environment?

In the visual process, images are perceived by the eye – through an activity called “scanning”² – and then sent to the brain where they are interpreted and acquire a sense, the eye itself does not complete the visual process, because the retina simply transmits signs³ to the brain, which is responsible for interpreting and decrypting them.

“Visual communication occurs through visual messages that are part of the great family of the messages that reach our senses: sound, temperature, dynamics” (MUNARI, 2001. P.68).

According to Munari (2001), a sender sends a message and a receiver receives it, the latter, however, when amid an environment of disorder, may amend or repeal certain messages⁴.

According to Gibson (1966) in some circumstances the perceptual systems cannot capture enough information to work with (as in the dark or in fog). However, in other circumstances, they manage to capture too much information to work with. In an environment of many events and of sights, sounds, smells and textures everywhere, the

² The human visual system obtains information from the illuminated environment by an activity called “scanning”, where the individual successively looks at the parts of a whole in the quest for information. The individual who observes an environment has a succession of optical stimuli, not a simultaneous panorama, however, what he perceives is the set, and not a succession of visual fields (GIBSON, 1966. p. 251).

³ A sign can be an icon, an index or a symbol, it represents something for someone (PIGNATARI, 2004); and is related to non-verbal language (FARINA, 1982).

⁴ “a red light in an environment that is predominantly a red light will be almost annulled, or else a transit sign in common colors, set next to other signs also common, it will mix with them, canceling out the uniformity” (MUNARI, 2001,p.68).

individual cannot register it all immediately, and his perception must then be selective. The number of different identifiable objects in different directions is so large that one cannot look at everything. In environments with many things happening, and too fast, comprehension becomes almost impossible.

Faced with this situation, the person develops strategies of perception. So after things are categorized in the environment and their properties abstracted, their number is reduced to a few categories of interest and subcategories are neglected. At this stage, only the information required to identify an object need to be captured, and all other information, unless special, can be neglected. Therefore, the perception of an object becomes a scheme of what that object would be if the individual were to observe it carefully. So, with just a quick glance the individual is able to greatly reduce the amount of information available⁵. However, Gibson (1966) highlights that these perception strategies can be misleading. If the information necessary for the perception of the object is, for some reason, included in the subcategories neglected by the observer, their perception will be impaired.

According to Munari (2001), although the visual message is well designed so as not to become deformed during the transmission, it will find obstacles to reach the receiver, because each receiver has different “filters”, that the message must go through to be received, which can be of sensory (e.g. color-blind), functional (psychophysiological characteristics such as the difference between an adult and a child) and cultural (the individual only recognizes what was perceived culturally) character. After crossing the area of disturbance, the message will reach the receiver, which will provide different answers to the received message.

Between images that are presents according to their context, and specifically for the purpose of this work some distinctions should be pointed out: media features and intention.

Considering site where media take place and its support, Cury (2004) considers Exterior Communication as the set of all types of parts and media whose messages are exposed, open, and which are issued and received outside the home: **outdoors**, or fixed in any urban space (including private lots) fixed on buildings visible from urban public

⁵ The situation is exemplified by Lynch, “to achieve continuity in the midst of sensory confusion, many observers eliminate the visual content of their images, using abstractions such as ‘restaurant’ or ‘second street’. This works both day and night, by car or on foot, rain or shine, even through some effort and deprivation.” (LYNCH, 1999, p. 96)

space, or fixed on mobile transport vehicles (including people); in **internal areas** of commercial establishments or common areas of institutions/enterprises, public or private, enclosed shopping centers or events, public transport stations.

According to Cury (2004) and Sant'anna (2002), external communication has two basic characteristics that differentiate it from other media: it does not require an action from the target audience (turning on the television or buying a newspaper) and is compulsory (does not allow to be turned off because there is no way to not see the city, the individual must be confronted⁶ with it in urban areas).

This media includes a variety of formats (posters, billboards, backlit panels, transport vehicles, inflatables, giveaways, etc.), some are standardized (billboards) and others are not. And many are the synonyms used to refer to it: outdoor media, outdoor communication, extensive communication, visual communication, alternative communication, outdoor advertising or publicity, alternative media, complementary media, extensive media, among others.

Concerning to intention, visual communication can be accidental and intentional communication. Accidental visual communication is not, according to the author, intended to communicate something precise; intentional communication, by contrast, aims to communicate accurate information using an accurate code. Accidental communication can be freely interpreted by the recipient, whereas intentional communication should be received in the totality of what is meant by the sender. Intentional visual communication can be further examined under two aspects: the aesthetic (subjective) information and practical information (e.g. commercial establishment identification sign).

In order to provide criteria for the organization for the outdoor media in the landscape, three channels are identified by Carr (1973) for their transmission, according to their classification per function: traffic channel (traffic control and directional information), identification channel (identification of products and activities in the establishment where the message is located) and advertising channel (advertising of products and activities in the establishment where the message is located or outside of it).

⁶ Sant'anna (2002) considers this contact casual.

It should be noted that beyond this important classification it is also necessary to differentiate between the content of speech, whether commercial or not, to establish an order of priority as to the messages.

In the same direction concerning the intention of communication Passini (1984), in his study on spatial orientation in architecture, offers the following classification for signaling according to its function within the process of orientation of the individual: **directional** signaling (also placed in the traffic channel between others according Carr (1973) classification of site), and **identification** signaling (also placed in the identification channel for Carr (1973)).

In the elaboration of signaling pieces intended for landscape orientation in general, some characteristics in relation to the support and the content of the message are described by some researches in that direction (PASSINI 1984; ELY et al, 2001). The graphic design of signs, the choice of font, the contrast of black, white and other colors, size, position, lighting, all contribute to legibility and relative ease of finding information.

When its function is to promote a product, service or brand, outside the commercial establishment, some features are important to be observed. According to Sant'anna (2002), in such conditions, the external media is a kind of advertising typically directed at the masses, seen indiscriminately by all sorts of people, so its operation is not only of a commercial nature, but it's also used for public interest campaigns. Its features are: 1) flexibility (can be used in a wide region, or only in one neighborhood); 2) opportunity (can be used at crucial moments and replaced as soon as necessary); 3) fast and constant action (certain public roads provide constant flow of people, so the action of the poster is constant); impact (impresses by the size and color or in contrast with the place where it is located); memorization (because the poster is seen repeatedly); simplicity (because the message should be concise and brief). The importance of a message being concise is also highlighted by other authors (PASSINI, 1984; MASKULKA, 1999).

Considering these and having in mind that the Clean City Law is related to the urban advertising, the one used by outdoor media and which affects directly commercial settings and the promotion of brands and products, it is necessary to explain the process of control in urban landscape as occurred in São Paulo which ended in the Law mentioned before. Some aspects of this Law are important to be highlighted.

URBAN ADVERTISING CONTROL

From the early time of São Paulo City until 1880, ads for the identification of commercial establishments were very discrete and used more drawings than words, since most of the population was illiterate and people transited on foot or in carriages, with no need for major announcements for the identification of the business and its activity. At this point, there were no regulatory tools for outdoor advertising.

The first law was no. 1826 of July 10th, 1914, which regulates advertising in foreign language, obvious consequence of the import of whole U.S. ads.

During the period of 1889-1930, the city of São Paulo was consolidated as the major city of the State of São Paulo, causing the business activity to suffer a significant growth, contributing to the expansion of the advertising number, where the visibility of the urban space and landscape is no longer restricted to the pedestrians. This visibility was also extended to the trams users and passenger cars that started to travel on the new streets, avenues and viaducts of the city.

Going throughout the next period (1930-1960), urban landscape of São Paulo was marked by the increase in population density and buildings, including skyscrapers, for a sharper distinction between fine and popular trade, and the considerable increase in the volume of advertising. Then, outdoor advertising has become more regulated in the city, through a series of laws, decrees and acts. One of the most important legislations was the Arthur Savoy Code of Works, of November 19th, 1929, which held on ads in lights and neon and imposed license fees for the installation of advertisements in public areas.

In the fifties the objectives of the municipal legislation concerning outdoor advertising were clear: to define fees and installation points for the ads, prohibit placement in public places and regulate the placement on bus stops (Law 4563 of October 28th, 1954).

Step by step, the face of the São Paulo city ceased to be “European” and acquired traits of the great metropolis to reflect the face of well-established consumer society that would follow in the next period.

With the strengthening of the market of outdoor advertising and the need to regulate this type of advertising, some changes were made to previous laws, especially in regard to the content of the advertising. This review began during the military dictatorship since 1964, which adopted as a standard the censorship and restriction of the media. (MENDES 2006)

In 1990, the Organic Law of São Paulo, in Title V (The Development of the City – Chapter I – Urban Policy), also addressed issues relating to outdoor advertising. However, the most significant laws of this period were 12,115, from June 12th, 1996, replaced by 13,525 of March 1st, 2003, responsible for the regulation of outdoor advertising in São Paulo.

With the apparent intention to abolish Law 13,525, considered the most permissive law regarding the regulation of outdoor advertising in the urban landscape, the Mayor Gilberto Kassab's government passed Law 14,223 of September 26th, 2006, which is known as "Clean City Law". This is because it established guidelines for the reduction of identification ads and prohibited the placement of advertisements on occupied land, empty land, building walls, outdoor billboards, totems, etc.

The prohibition of advertisements ("out-of-home") made the enforcement easier and, though skeptics claimed that the law would not be obeyed, it was. The ads have migrated to cities in the metropolitan area of São Paulo and other cities throughout the state, and the city of São Paulo could strip its architecture.

It would be a dream come true to many architects and urban planners who have graduated with the theory that only architecture should influence the composition of urban space and that urban visual communication, especially outdoor media, is the sole responsible for urban visual pollution.

However, the approval of the Clean City Law and the consequent withdrawal of the advertisements from the urban space came against the migration of outdoor media from the major media (billboards, totems, building walls) to the street furniture, such as occurred in the 90s in Paris, a movement led by Jean Claude Decaux, owner of street furniture company JCDecaux. The strongest argument was that the supports for the outdoor advertising did not play any role to the citizen, while urban furniture equipment functioned as bus stops, clocks, etc.

Law 15,465 was sanctioned by the Mayor of São Paulo, Gilberto Kassab, on October 18th, 2011 and allows the opening of bidding for a public utility that can install pieces of street furniture, recover some existing and explore advertising in totems, bus stops and clocks. Two important points of this law should be highlighted: that of allowing foreign companies to participate in the bidding process and being restricted to urban clocks, totem poles and bus stops, pieces of urban furniture with a large area for exploration of advertising and that are the flagships of multi-national companies such as JCDecaux, ADShell, CEMUSA etc.

Paradoxically to this process of globalization, that leaves many cities equal to each other and causes them to lose their identity, more and more local projects arise with the goal of providing higher quality to urban spaces and recover their visual identity.

The best known examples of urban regeneration are Barcelona (Olympic Village), Berlin (Friedrichstrasse), London (Docklands) and Buenos Aires (Puerto Madero). Besides these, other cities such as Aveiro and Coimbra, in Portugal, have adopted this type of intervention, with support from the commerce. These two cities have adopted projects with British methodology - based on accessibility, attraction, entertainment/beauty and action - designed and funded by the European Union.

In Sao Paulo, we find some actions of public and private initiatives to promote the recovery of degraded areas and their visual identity as a joint action in 1999, the AMAPPH (Association of Residents and Friends of Pacaembu, Perdizes and Higienópolis) with the Public Ministry and the School of Architecture and Urbanism of the University of Sao Paulo, which resulted in the substitution of advertising of up to 30m sq for others of smaller sizes at Angélica Avenue. This was one of the first initiatives to stimulate awareness and change of attitude on the part of large chains of bank agencies and diners – but it fell into oblivion.

Actions like these encouraged a number of other revitalization implementation of urban projects initiatives geared to improving the aesthetic quality of the landscape. The Viva Liberdade Project (2002), designed by architect and artist Tikashi Fukushima, for example, whose main objective is to strengthen the identity of the Liberdade neighborhood as typically oriental, has been successful. So it is with the Beehive Movement, in Vila Olimpia, started in 2002, which has as main goal the restructuring of public space through measures such as the adoption of underground cabling, creation of the visual identity for the street furniture and sidewalks (MENDES, 2006).

Concerning to the both urban interventions taken ahead at the Oscar Freire Street, the analysis of its retailing and services specificities may help to understand the results observed.

THE COMMERCIAL STREET AND URBAN ADVERTISING

Commercial streets are characterized by the predominance (almost exclusive) of shops and services establishments. Of course, the commercial activity, that usually occurs at the ground floor of buildings, is due to the flow of people, or vehicles that

transport people, moving at the street level. The variety of commercial establishments is therefore a direct result of the type of flow and its intensity, as well as the existence of activities regarded as flow generator poles, and its viability is directly related to the existing urban dynamics, i.e., uses, densities and urban design of public roads.

The type of trade is therefore directly related to the type of purchases the consumer makes and can be divided into: planned purchases (or destination) where the consumer is already drawn to the site with a definite intent (for example shopping for groceries or furniture); impulse purchases, whose strategy is to induce the purchase unexpectedly by the client (popcorn in front of a school); compared purchases where the provision of equal and similar products allows the comparison (specialized, such as tools, chandeliers etc.); rare purchases that require specific and previously researched places (surgical articles); convenience shopping, designed to readily provide unexpectedly needed and not always programmed products (charcoal for a barbecue, batteries for equipment). (NELSON, 1958; DAVIDSON&SWEENEY&STAMPFL, 1988; VARGAS, 1992, 2001)

However, the difference in the client's type of intention is not the only factor that demands differentiated attention and spaces. Each type of product also varies as to: frequency of use, that is, a daily, weekly, rare or sporadic use; the perishability or durability; the size of the good; and the target audience (income, age). (VARGAS, 2000, 2001)

All these changes will require different layouts, whether it's the minimum size of the store, its layout, the need and variety of displays, the need for quick or delayed parking by the consumer, spaces for loading and unloading, and the need for identification and marking of the establishment.

The commerce on Oscar Freire Street has a predominance of brand apparel and footwear establishments, alongside a range of household items, decor and art, and food services such as cafés, bakeries and restaurants, some also branded, aimed at an audience of high income. It has heavy vehicular traffic in a very dense area, with vertical high-income housing, combined with commercial uses and diversified services in their surroundings.

Initially one might say, then, that the Oscar Freire Street, offering predominantly articles of clothing, is representative of impulse buying, where the display has a key role being designed for an audience of high income. That is, with luxury and sophistication, with large spaces where the windows function as elements for inviting customers to

venture to go inside and experience the consumer environment offered. In this case, the sidewalks have an important role to allow the approximation of the client to the store and facilitate their displacement during the “window shopping” activity.

Oscar Freire Street, also presenting itself as a venue for exhibition of famous brands can, at first, stimulate planned purchase, where the client is intended for a specific store and where the existence of parking would facilitate their purchase.

These two mentioned aspects, the importance of sidewalks and parking lots, point out that urban works made throughout the Commercial Street Programs in 2006, were adequated to this kind of commercial street, considering that as part of the redevelopment promoted in the area in a public-private partnership, the urban works have included installation of underground electrical wiring⁷, with a positive impact over the street urban landscape.

Secondly, the street starts to attract unusual users, from various social classes, even if only to appreciate the windows and be near luxury. The possibility of enjoying brands and the exuberance of the windows turn part of the public present there, from consumer into flaneur⁸. In this way, the offer of spaces for sitting at the sidewalks creating a leisure ambience shows that the urban works from the Commercial Streets Program, once again, were adequated.

People go to observe, meet friends, to see and be seen. This may explain, for example, the existence of cafes and restaurants on site⁹.

Facing these specificities, the urban communication offered by all the store advertisings together goes beyond the identification of a single shop, which acquiring the condition of casual communication, as mentioned before (MUNARI, 2001), being freely interpreted by street users.

What counts and what leads people to Oscar Freire Street is the status of being there. That is, the sign value assigned to the place, as would say Baudrillard (2007)

⁷ According to the Guide from the Scenic America organization, (which offers strategies to reduce the visual impact of aerial elements, such as electrical wiring, information totems and others) at the time of relocation or reorganization of the aerial elements the most apparent benefit is a considerable improvement in the appearance and restoration of the visual landscape. Such projects could contribute to the increase in property value, increase profits and attract new establishments. These projects can also offer an opportunity for cities to rethink their landscapes. (Scenic America, 2001a , 2001b)

⁸ Already in the 19th century, Walter Benjamin would describe the flâneur in Charles Boudalaire: A Lyric Poet in an Era of High Capitalism, as the individual who delights in watching the city, showing that there is some affinity between the flâneur as a human type and commercial galleries, the famous “Arcades” which were shopping passages opened within blocks.

⁹ As anticipated by Lefevbre (1971) the café, french creation, has always had as major function the gathering of friends and having fun without getting drunk.

This situation turned the street into a place of reference for the purchase of luxury products, strengthening the whole 10 and not the stores individually, printing a “place brand”. That is, the place is seen as a product, extrapolating its condition of use value as a physical space for the development of urban activities, as worked out by several authors (LEFEVBRE,1971; VARGAS 1998; HARVEY, 2001; BRAUDILLARD, 2007).

In this way, the communication intention can be identifying as “Advertising Chanel” as mentioned by CARR (1973), or brand reinforcement (VARGAS, 2007) which does not have the store identification as the main goal.

These “brand places” may include spaces where night leisure activities predominate, in which are grouped bars, restaurants, entertainment, whose main idea is to strengthen the group of establishments, and the difference between them is made by service, by type of service or product offered reinforced by word of mouth or by using other media, including billboards and electronic panels and by the fact of being there. In this category we can mention Times Square and Las Vegas, in the USA, Vila Madalena in Sao Paulo, the Latin Quarter in Paris etc.¹¹ (VARGAS,2008). These spaces eventually become strong tourist attractions, in that case, shopping tourism. (VARGAS, 1998)

Anyway, since these street stores also have the intention of strengthening their individual brand – with whom circulates there even without the intention of buying – the individualization and identification of the name is still fundamental to the trader. Often it will be the architecture itself (VARGAS, 2003), which starts to operate as a promotional element, or even a standardized finish that identifies the brand of the product sold.

¹⁰ In regions where what counts is impulse buying, i.e., what we do without the original intention – because the product’s image seduced us or reminded us of the need –, the importance of identifying the property loses its importance. What counts now is the window and other forms of appeal to the pedestrian. So, generally, in specialized or diversified shopping streets, it is the attraction of the whole that makes the difference and not necessarily that of a specific property. What is offered is the chance of finding what one wants comparing prices, quality and even the service and credit facilities. It is not the advertising for a single store, but for the place. In some cases, such as the 25 de Março Street, in Sao Paulo, aimed at a popular audience, the excess messages and advertising, by increasing the high traffic of the place, aids in strengthening the idea of vitality, which is similar to our Arab origins of trade. (VARGAS, 2008, 2001; VARGAS&MENDES, 2002)

¹¹ Neighborhoods with ethno-cultural characteristics are also strong examples, such as the Chinatowns around the world, or Little Italies or the neighborhood of Liberdade in Sao Paulo, offering a beautiful legacy of the Japanese community, which today is in the process of transformation and assimilation of other Eastern cultures.

Shops and brands found on Oscar Freire Street are also found on luxury shopping streets in cities like New York, Paris, Milan, Tokyo. The brands are practically the same, the way they are inserted into the architecture are also the same, as well as the exploitation of identification outdoor media.

In this sense, the regulation of outdoor advertising on Oscar Freire Street is made according to international standards of visual communication. For this reason, the identification ads were already much more discrete than those transmitted in the rest of the city, even before the adoption of the Clean City Law. The exploration of the windows as elements of visual communication was already ahead of the laws on outdoor advertising since the mid 80s.

Upscale commerce generally has a communications consultancy that understands the process of persuasion and selling the product beyond the point of sale, leaving the product to be well presented to the client; in this condition the work of drawing attention to the brand is not the responsibility of the point of sale, which is responsible only for its proper presentation to the client, so ads and brand identification.

Movements with the public-private partnership appear daily in every city in the world in order to recover degraded areas and/or characterize the vocation of certain locations. Within this process, architecture, commerce and urban visual communication play a crucial role.

In globalized cities, little is said about regulatory tools that are able to satisfactorily meet all regions of the same city. The projects are more comprehensive and objective. We cannot consider the region of “Times Square”, in New York, the same way as Tribeca. Nor can we consider Oscar Freire Street in the same way that the rest of the city of Sao Paulo.

USERS PERCEPTION

For Merleau-Ponty (1999), an individual perceives his surroundings because he is able to recognize and identify objects in it and relate them to his own context; the individual's perception, however, always depends on the context, which is variable¹². In this sense, the comprehension of its meaning depends on the relationship between the object, its context and the individual who perceives it. Hence the need to understand the perception of the individual within a given context.

¹² For the physical attributes, for example, it varies according to the light, and how it incides on the objects; and for the symbolic objects it may vary according to the culture of each individual.

In this sense and in order to realize the environmental quality and the assessment and environmental preference, Rapoport (1978) states that urban environments must adjust to the environmental quality criteria and the imaginative level of its users.

The research explores the mental image and perception of users about the environment and its surroundings. Researches conducted in this direction generally approach the preference of the individuals and their affection for certain landscapes.

Methodology used in this exploratory study, of qualitative approach, involves a pilot survey with users of the site in an unrepresentative sample of 13¹³ subjects, since what matters in this study is the quality of responses rather than statistical representativeness. To the selection of the cutout, defined between Melo Alves e Padre João Manoel Streets, and application of the interviews, exploratory visits were conducted, mapping and surveying establishments, defining the visuals addressed considered more representative of the area studied to illustrate the research. The area selected is where interventions were implemented in 2006 and concentrates a high number of commercial establishments.

The images shown below illustrate the time interval in which both interventions were performed on the street:



Figure 1 - Oscar Freire Street before and after the interventions.

¹³ “Twenty interviews are usually more than enough for non-statistic samples” (Ghiglione, 1991, p.50), in general they are applied until they show a repetition of the answers.



Figure 2 - Oscar Freire Street before and after the interventions.



Figure 3 - Oscar Freire Street before and after the interventions

It should be noted that from an exploratory tour and from the survey of establishments on the street, telephone numbers were collected for the research, since in a first attempt to carry out face to face interviews, they did not achieve much success in relation to the collaboration of potential responders. The interviews were recorded and transcribed and results were analysed categorizing its content after interviews were applied.

Results and Discussion

Overall, almost half of the users contacted responded to the interview. The questions, all open-ended, aimed at achieving a greater depth in the respondents' answers and identify possibilities not considered so far on the research.

The key question of the interview was whether the user had noticed a significant change in the landscape of Oscar Freire Street in the last 5 or 6 years. The responses were majorly positive for the redevelopment project occurred in the street in 2006,

which made the street even more enjoyable according to respondents. In this questioning, none of the respondents mentioned the withdrawal or modification of any ads.

Only in a second stage of the research, which questioned specifically about the appearance of the street due to the implementation of the Clean City Law, some respondents said it had been improved, which made the road more enjoyable, and specifically mentioned illegal advertising posters attached in the public space, others still reported not to have seen a significant change, once in that place, unlike what happens in popular commerce streets, the ads were unobtrusive.

Users also mentioned finding what they want and being easily able to understand indicative notices, which denotes a suitable size for reading. However, when questioned about the city of Sao Paulo in general, one interviewee said that once the Law was established, she felt completely lost when looking for shops in other areas of the city, but now has become accustomed to the situation because, she says, “Brazilians can become accustomed to everything”.

However, the users’ satisfaction with the pleasantness of this particular space is notable, especially after the implementation of the redevelopment project done.

Also notable among the respondents is the positive impact of the Clean City Law in the landscape of Sao Paulo.

Still it is interesting to observe that, among the retailers interviewed, one of them mentioned the change imposed by the Clean City Law reflected in declining sales during promotions due to the prohibition of stickers pasted on shop windows.

FINAL REMARKS

As a conclusion, it is important to highlight that, when urban interventions consider local aspects in the process, the possibility of being successful is bigger , as it was observed in Oscar Freire Street submitted to the Commercial Street Program.

Otherwise , as pointed out by street users and by images presented, in streets like Oscar Freire, the removal of aerial elements, such as electrical wiring, information totems and others were more significant in terms of the city appearance than the control of stores advertising as proposed by the Clean City Law. In this case, the store advertisings follow brand store international standers which is the main characteristic of their retailing activities. More over their way of advertising must have the contribution of communication experts.

Another aspect related to the “Clean City Law” is the intention to concentrate the outdoor advertisings in street furniture contributing to a higher uniformity of the city images and to the loss of their identity, remembering that cities are the physical manifestation of the societies which built them. Mainly if this street furniture reproduces the same pattern borrowed from international companies which are monopolizing this market.

The result of the interventions on Oscar Freire Street, (where this diversity of aspects related to urban visual quality are observed) together with the symbolism of the street for whom it is used (as evidenced by the positive tone in the responses of respondents) are reflected in the strong topophilic sense of the respondent in relation to the site, or the fact of enjoying the street.

Finally, the interference of the outdoor media over the urban landscape is undoubtedly true. Nevertheless, it is part of urban culture (CULLEN, 1971; VARGAS, 2008) and urban interventions which consider the local peculiarities can better contribute to the urban landscape improvement and to reinforcing its identity.

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