

“Ocupa Rua”: a project for reusing the streets of downtown São Paulo starting with the Covid-19 pandemic.

“Ocupa Rua”: um projeto de reuso das ruas do Centro de São Paulo, a partir da pandemia da Covid-19.

Claudia Erthal

Postdoctoral researcher and PhD in Audiovisual Media and Processes of the Universidade Federal de São Carlos.

E-mail:

claudiaerthal2@gmail.com

Abstract

This article proposes a reflection based on the concept of the five skins created by the Austrian architect and artist Friedensreich Hundertwasser, having as its object the pilot project “*Ocupa Rua*”, carried out in São Paulo, on new uses of an urban center and the layers of perception and experience that this project can provide. It includes walks, readings and the use of mobile devices by users/walkers as a form of communication and social belonging, generating a lively communicational dynamic. The presence of the user who seems to collaborate with the creation of new reading layers for the city permeates this text. It is believed that it goes beyond the commercial purpose and, by containing concepts of revitalization as a source of possibilities for reusing the streets; it becomes also a form of reuse and of the city as a whole from this starting point.

Keywords: “*Ocupa Rua*”; Five Skins; Urban Space; Mobile devices; Pandemic.

Resumo

Este texto propõe uma reflexão a partir do conceito das cinco peles, criado pelo arquiteto e artista austríaco Friedensreich Hundertwasser, tendo como objeto o projeto-piloto “*Ocupa Rua*”, realizado em São Paulo, sobre novos usos de um centro urbano e das camadas de percepção e vivência que este projeto pode proporcionar. Parte de caminhadas, leituras e o uso de dispositivos móveis pelos usuários/caminhantes locais como forma de

comunicação e pertencimento social, geram uma dinâmica comunicacional viva. A presença do usuário, que parece colaborar com a criação de novas camadas de leitura da cidade perpassa este texto. Acredita-se que ele ultrapasse o propósito comercial e, ao conter conceitos de revitalização como uma fonte de possibilidades de reuso das ruas, seja também uma forma de reuso e da cidade como um todo.

Palavras-chaves: “Ocupa Rua”; Cinco Peles; Espaço Urbano; Dispositivos móveis; Pandemia.

Introduction

The city of São Paulo is proud of the title of capital of gastronomy in Brazil for offering a diversified world cuisine and making it a great consumer market. But between March 2020 and May 2021, about 12,000 bars and restaurants closed their doors permanently in the city, as an effect of the economic crisis caused by the global pandemic of Covid-19, which caused the population to be forced to stay at home awaiting sanitary measures. In order to combat the closure of the commercial activities of establishments in the gastronomic area in this region, the project “Ocupa Rua” was created in May 2020, in five streets of the Center, an area affected by the lack of public, especially the floating public of business hours. Developed collaboratively with the participation of chefs¹, architects, entrepreneurs, journalists and the government, the project arose from a question common to all: how to attract the public back to the bars and restaurants of that neighborhood with health security? The solution found was imported from projects created in New York and Paris months before: terraces occupying car spaces as extensions of the sidewalk of

¹Recognized nationally and internationally, Janaína Rueda and her husband Jefferson Rueda are chefs and partners at “Bar da Dona Onça”, “A Casa do Porco” and “Hot Pork Not Pork”, located in the “Ocupa Rua” area. In 2021, “A Casa do Porco” was chosen as the 17th best restaurant in the world by the British magazine Restaurant. Janaína Rueda was elected Icon of Latin America/2020 by the 50 Best, annual award with the 100 best restaurants in the world. In 2019, Jefferson Rueda came in 39th place on this same list and has a Michelin star for his work. More information at: https://g1.globo.com/sp/sao-paulo/noticia/2021/10/05/a-casa-do-porco-no-centro-de-sp-e-eleito-o-17o-melhor-restaurante-do-mundo-segundo-a-lista-worlds-50-best.ghtml?utm_source=push&utm_medium=app&utm_campaign=pushg1

bars and restaurants. These spaces received furniture, painting, plants and trash cans, and transformed the five streets of the project into a point of visibility and social belonging.

By highlighting the neighborhood's old commerce, the project brought another movement of people to the place, guided by mobile devices and social networks (ERTHAL, 2018). A new audience arrives there in search of news, meals, drinks, leisure, beauty, security and the outdoors. Thanks to the geolocation of the devices and the posting of information online by users, the practices of "Ocupa Rua" line the urban body with a new technological skin, creating additional layers of meaning and symbolic circulation, both for the place and for themselves. Even without specific apps, or referrals on a public map like Google Maps, "Occupy Street" has become a trend. The user is posted on social networks, producing information and creating a live communication event (MARCONDES FILHO, 2013) in the permeable fabric of the metropolis. A kind of virtual "boca a boca" (a world of mouth marketing) that makes the city move and establish new sociocultural meanings.

Through empirical observation, articles published in the press and available on the Internet, a reading of theorists and essayists, and a reading of Hundertwasser's five-skin theory (RESTANY, 1987), this article reflects and explores the socioeconomic connections of this new reinvented urban space to attract the user of social networks and sociocultural issues imbricated in the remapping of a public space, which now integrates a new way of living and living together.

The user of mobile devices, such as mobile phones and tablets moves through the city at the same time as a citizen, as an observer and also as a communication subject of a reality in which the act of communication is established live and in a place/time in which they merge as actors and producers of information. The production of information takes place in the act of its event and at the moment they post, enjoy, repost and comment on the reality itself in the plasticity of the permeable fabric of the contemporary metropolis, bringing to this reality a possible reading of Flanêur, from Benjamin.

What is intended in the article is to show, through the reading of reports and publications on the subject, in addition to the empirical perceptions themselves from the author's experience on the spot, how can happen the redesign of an urban space

tracing new routes of public use. With trees, plants, trash cans, fewer cars and safer streets, “Ocupa Rua” is a pilot project and brought to the city a new clothing, a new skin (RESTANY, 1987), changing the sociocultural meaning (EICHER, 1987), in the sense of a new way of inhabiting it and making it a social and identity environment of generations more concerned with what changes can offer human, with new materialities and meanings and with a new circulation of the symbolic economy of what the city can represent for each one.

1. The downtown of São Paulo

The downtown area of São Paulo² in which this work devotes attention, was only included as an expansion of the old Center from the 19th century, a movement driven by the “Ciclo do Café” (Coffee Cycle), which had as a consequence economic growth, as well as the local political importance. Immigration, railways and capital allowed São Paulo to begin industrializing. At this moment there were also changes in the landscape of the city, which attracted the construction of new buildings, from the “Vale do Anhangabaú”, the construction of the “Viaduto do Chá” (1892) and the “Viaduto Santa Efigênia” (1913), allowing the transposition of natural barriers to allow the expansion and verticalization of the city.

On the other side of the “Vale do Anhangabaú” was born, then, a new region, called “Centro Novo” (New Center), which today extends to Paulista Avenue. This latest became the financial center of the city in the decades from 1970. The “Distrito da República” is part of the New Center and was formed around the “Praça das Milícias” – still of the eighteenth century – renamed “Praça da República”, from the proclamation in 1889.

During the first half of the 20th century, this new centrality was formed, a new cultural and commercial axis with interventions that institute to the city, a series of layers, establishing changes that go through the construction of shops, companies, restaurants, coffees and buildings of cultural purpose, such as the “Theatro Municipal” in 1911, which attracts hotels and other services to the new area.

²According to: <http://www.acervosdacidade.prefeitura.sp.gov.br/PORTALACERVOS/>

The “República” region is one of the most contributing to the development of the city, attracting housing buildings, such as “Copan”, inaugurated in 1965, where about 5,000 people live; in addition to universities, companies, hotels, commerces, bars and restaurants, nightlife and services, and becoming an important influence to this day for the construction of the idea of what is currently called downtown São Paulo, a reference for inhabitants and tourists, as being the place from where the city grows and develops in the 20th century.

Currently, with 12.39 million inhabitants³, São Paulo is one of the most populous cities in the world and is constantly undergoing transformations. Its regions also go through moments of ascension and decay, which depend on public policies subject to the seasonality of power and which can, as a consequence, attract investment. A place also of social contrasts, which houses populations in street situation and in severe socioeconomic situation.

However, even around serious problems and that seem to be avoided by public administrations, projects arise for the renovation of the downtown and part of the “Centro Novo”⁴ and the region should receive requalification of squares, parks and sidewalks, bicycle paths and green paths, which include landscape interventions. Renovations such as this have an impact on the daily life of the city and initiatives related to the creative economy, improvement in neighborhood cleaning services, lighting, events, security and increased budget for urban zealworks, which are part of the Goal Plan of the City of São Paulo for this area of the city.

Popularly, “Centro Novo” and “Centro Velho” are treated from “Centro”, always with the specification of some reference of the region. For the purposes of this reflection, we will use only “Centro” (downtown) for the region fixed by this work.

The downtown of the cities has always been a place of great circulation of people that, in general, concentrates the commercial and service activities of the cities. São Paulo is no different, although with the numerous expansions, such as

³According to: <https://cidades.ibge.gov.br/brasil/sp/sao-paulo/panorama>

⁴In accordance with: 1) <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/cotidiano/2021/07/gestao-nunes-lanca-pacote-de-isencoes-para-revitalizar-centro-de-sp.shtml>; 2) <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/cotidiano/2021/07/falta-participacao-popular-em-projeto-de-nunes-para-revitalizar-centro-de-sp-dizem-especialistas.shtml>

neighborhoods that have become districts that also concentrate a certain autonomy today, taking this immediate function from the downtown. Even so, it can be affirmed that the downtown is still a place that stimulates walking and provides a glimpse of the region from the point of view of those who move walking. Cars, motorcycles, bicycles, buses and subways circulate in downtown São Paulo in an intense way. With the changes and structures created by several governments, it began to have bike paths, streets closed to pedestrians that, seasonally, brought to this region the incentive to attend the place, due to its commercial and cultural life, as well as its gastronomic diversity. Today, the downtown of São Paulo concentrates an offer of cultural centers, museums and cultural points, in a city that also houses a variety of bars, restaurants and possibilities to enjoy national and international cuisine. Going to places of culture and gastronomy also encourages itself to walk through streets, sometimes narrower, in contrast to the wide avenues that map the evolution and transformations of the city.

2. Pandemic

The scenario of the global pandemic of the New Coronavirus projected a global economic crisis, which hit even harder developing countries, such as Brazil, projecting large numbers and establishing economic scenarios aggravated by the closure of business activities and the growing unemployment. As an illustration and according to the “Associação Brasileira de Bares e Restaurantes”, only in the capital, São Paulo, twelve thousand bars, restaurants and snack bars closed their doors for good between March 2020 and April 2021.

The operating restrictions imposed by the Coronavirus pandemic, the consequent absence of the face-to-face public and the decrease in sales are pointed out as the main causes. According to the same source, in state figures “of the 250,000 companies in the sector, 50,000 ceased to exist during the pandemic. Of the 1.8 million branch employees in the state, 400,000 lost their jobs in the same period.”⁵

⁵The data are from the Associação Brasileira de Bares e Restaurantes (Abrasel-SP), published in the major press in May 2021. According to: <https://g1.globo.com/sp/sao-paulo/noticia/2021/04/25/12-mil-bares-e-restaurantes-fecham-na-capital-paulista-durante-pandemia-diz-associacao-delivery-se-consolida.ghtml>.

In order to overcome economic losses, many of these establishments migrated to the service of deliveries by application or phone. Only in one of the largest platforms in activity in the country, iFood, the number of registered grew 78% in the state between March and December of 2020⁶. It is information like this that leads to the perception that traders from all areas have suffered and still suffer the impacts of the pandemic in the country⁷.

To overcome a situation of threat of closure of activities, some owners of bars and restaurants in downtown São Paulo first sought individual solutions for their establishments. And, together, other professionals developed an idea that would have a wider repercussion than just their initial goal of not closing the doors definitively.

In one of the stages of opening the trade during the pandemic, when bars and restaurants began to receive customers in a restricted way, without attending in the hall, a pilot project of occupation of the streets of “Centro Novo” transformed the way of working during this period, again attracting the customer to the establishment. This time, on sidewalks, as is already the case in non-pandemic times in Brazilian bars and cafes, and on the terraces of cities in Europe and the United States. Now, focusing on the external areas, this project has established a new form of customer relationship with the establishment and, consequently, with the city. And even though it was a pilot project, it launched a new look at the relationship with the street and the city. This region, traditionally frequented for commercial purposes and for the resolution of day-to-day affairs, has again attracted customers and brought a new breath to bars and restaurants that did not need to end activities.

3. “Ocupa Rua”

Sidewalks enlarged to the places where cars, tables were parked in the street, trees and plants, trash cans and lighting were parked. Five streets of downtown in São Paulo have been revitalized, offering to the population an option of conviviality, meals, walks and contact with an architectural, historical

⁶The same.

⁷By the time of delivery of this article, Brazil exceeds the mark of 600,000 killed by Covid-19. The numbers are from “Conass” (“Conselho Nacional de Secretários de Saúde”).

According to: <https://www.conass.org.br/painelconasscovid19/>.

and cultural heritage. At first, the intervention streets are General Jardim, Major Sertório, José Paulo Mantovan Freire and Bento Freitas, benefiting thirty-one establishments in total. The project “Ocupa Rua” was conceived by architecture and communication professionals, along with owners of bars and restaurants, who spent almost six months behind closed doors.

A project relevant for its commercial purpose, but also for the character of urban revitalization, curiously received a very timid media coverage, being restricted to daily or weekly factual reports, without further deepening on the repercussions on urban life of the city. It was through one of them that this author met the “Ocupa Rua” and it is from some of these reports that we extract immediate and factual references on the subject. The project's performance in social networks is restricted to a profile on Instagram (@ocuparua).

The journalist and gastronomic critic Alexandra Forbes took the initiative for the project and joined forces with chef and businesswoman Janaína Rueda, from “Bar da Dona Onça”, and her business partner and husband Jefferson Rueda, from “A Casa do Porco”; the architect Gustavo Cedroni and the landscaper Marcelo Faisal. While other major cities in the world, such as Paris and New York⁸, found the same type of solution and carried it out in May 2020, before São Paulo, because in the city there was a mix of obstacles and support from the public authorities, which delayed the realization and made the “Ocupa Rua” happen only about four months later, starting September 1, 2020. The project was executed in its entirety at no cost to the public coffers, in a collaborative action between architecture offices, visual communication, as well as industries and companies, which made the urban furniture for the place. Entrepreneurs in the gastronomic sector directly interested were already attracting a population to the downtown and started to attract an even more diversified public as a result of the project. The project brought the initial vision of a solution to the economic crisis, but which demonstrates more broadly the chance to expand the quality of life of society: following sanitary measures

⁸More information in: <https://vejasp.abril.com.br/blog/sao-paulo-nas-alturas/ocupacao-calcadas-ruas-restaurantes/>

And also available in: <https://valor.globo.com/mundo/noticia/2021/05/19/cidades-simbolo-do-ocidente-paris-e-nova-york-reabrem-nesta-quarta-feira.ghtml>

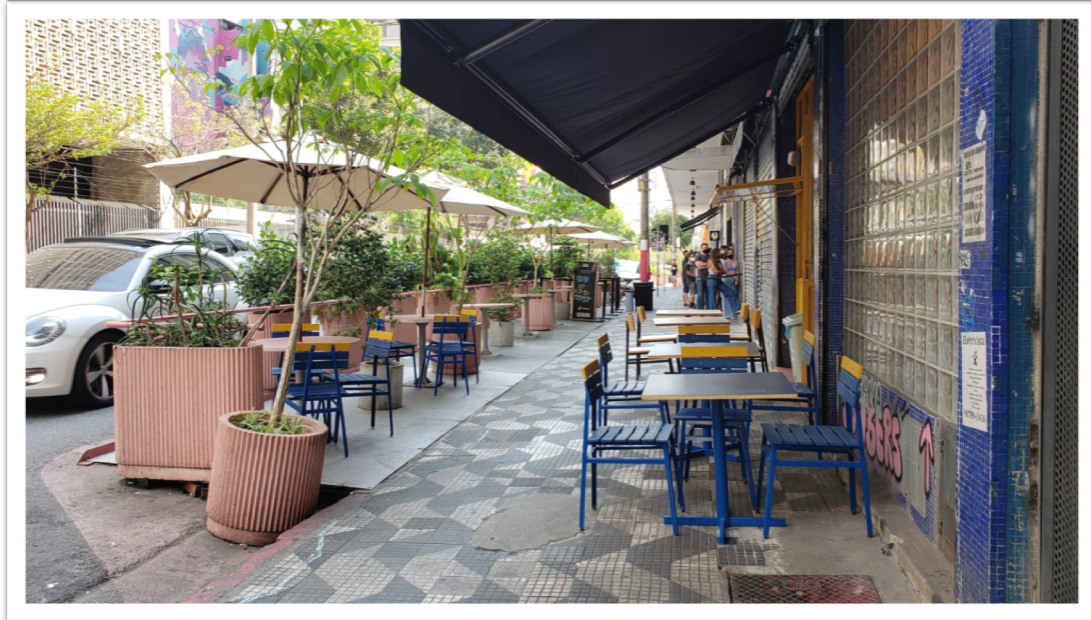
imposed in the face of the pandemic, the project is incorporated into the city landscape, creating an attribution and a social sense, beyond the economic objective initially desired, it makes the locals and the region a place of coexistence and socialization. The “Ocupa Rua” offers changes in the scenery of the metropolis, introducing a new way of using the streets and places.

The rescue of the walk, the walk in the street, the look that glimpses the place with other eyes different from those of a daily life instituted by the work routine, ends up suggesting and providing new perceptions and a relationship revisited with the places traveled. The project does not occupy the place of the sidewalk, however it appropriates spaces previously reserved for parking of cars. It is perceived that, in a way, this action seems to remove the role of vehicles and bring the center of attention to the walks. To some extent it reestablishes a relationship with that city that developed at the end of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century, with tables on the sidewalks, following the trend of European cafes, which brought with them a modernity in the way of looking at the new, and that can be associated with walking and attraction to novelty.

Ironically, in a city favorable to the continuity of this configuration, in the 21st century, of the use of public spaces, São Paulo lost its sidewalks to wider streets that, from the second half of the twentieth century, gave way to automobiles. And now it returns in part to an occupation similar to the previous one.

In the “Ocupa Rua” were placed pots with plants that isolate, to some extent, customers from cars, in addition to a second system of smaller pots to separate the tables and maintain the mandatory distancing. There are no suggestions for modification for a post-pandemic period yet.

Image 1 – Photo of the sidewalks that received the project “Ocupa Rua”. On it you can see on the left side the tables and chairs between the pots with plants and the trees, in the extension made over the old public parking spaces. On the right side of the image, the tables and chairs are next to the restaurant wall, which is a common practice in the city. The length of the occupation corresponds to the length of the restaurant on that sidewalk.



Source: Claudia Erthal and Janice Barcellos (September, 2021).

Image 2 – Unlike the photo in image 1, this is a part of “Ocupa Rua” that serves a small restaurant and, therefore, has a smaller extension than in the first photo.



Source: Claudia Erthal and Janice Barcellos (September, 2021).

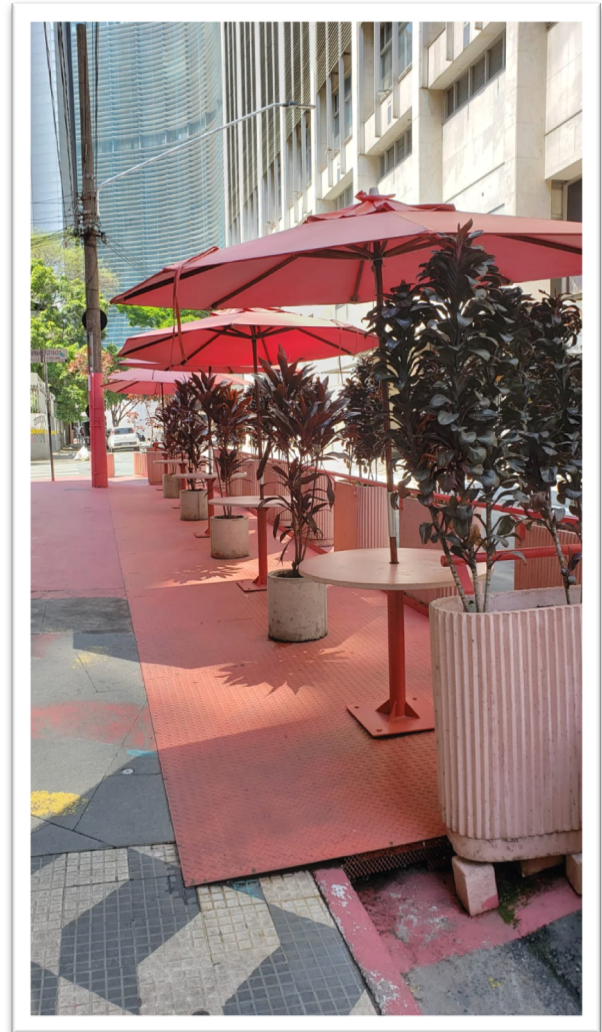
Image 3 – In this photo you can see park benches interspersed with potted plants, placed on an extension of the corner, in an area demarcated with the visual identity of the “Ocupa Rua” project. Benches are for public use.



Source: Claudia Erthal and Janice Barcellos (September, 2021).

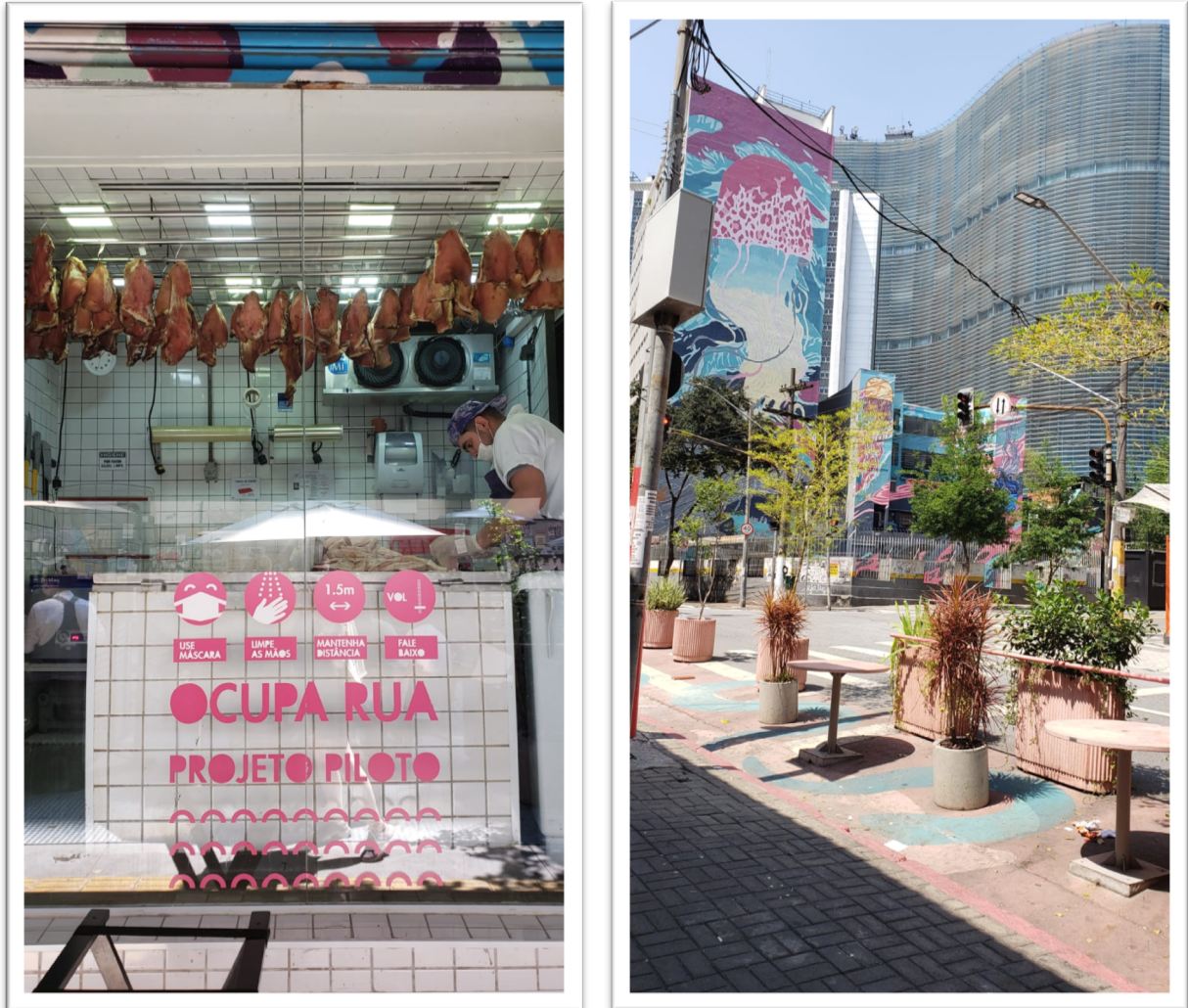
In the three previous photos, examples of the project “Ocupa Rua”, with urban furniture for the front of restaurants, bars and snack bars (Images 1 and 3). On the corners of these same streets. There are benches (Image 3) in the elongated spaces of the sidewalks for outdoor coexistence. In this case, the user of the site does not necessarily need to be consuming in any of the establishments and this detail of the “Ocupa Rua” is that it places itself as a space of public use. There is no reference in this detail and the objective that may be contained in it, so it is understood until the moment that it is an offer of the project for the city, with the idea of a social use that can meet the social distancing and the use of public space.

Images 4 and 5 – Furniture, posts and sidewalks painted in the colors established by the “Ocupa Rua” project, and installation of green trash cans hanging from the post.



Source: Claudia Erthal and Janice Barcellos (September, 2021).

Images 6 and 7 – Signage with sanitary measures adhesive on the windows of restaurants, indicating the use of masks; wash your hands; keep distance and still the “talk down” (photo 6), which applies to quiet times in the neighborhood. In the photo represented by image 7, the “Ocupa Rua” is in dialogue with street art and modernist architecture of some buildings in the region. The building in the background of the photo is the “Edifício Copan”, one of the icons of Brazilian architecture of the 20th century, designed by Oscar Niemeyer.



Source: Claudia Erthal and Janice Barcellos (September, 2021).

The architectural firm Nitsche, responsible for the visual identity of the project, developed a package of visual and graphic actions, which includes the colors defined for the painting of the extensions of the sidewalks, signage, awareness of urban circulation and sanitary procedures of the pandemic, painting of posts, guides, crosswalks, in addition to the definition and design of the project's furniture. Photo 6 shows some of these actions put into practice at “Ocupa Rua”. In the case of photo 7, there is a possibility of an aesthetic reading of the interaction with street art and with

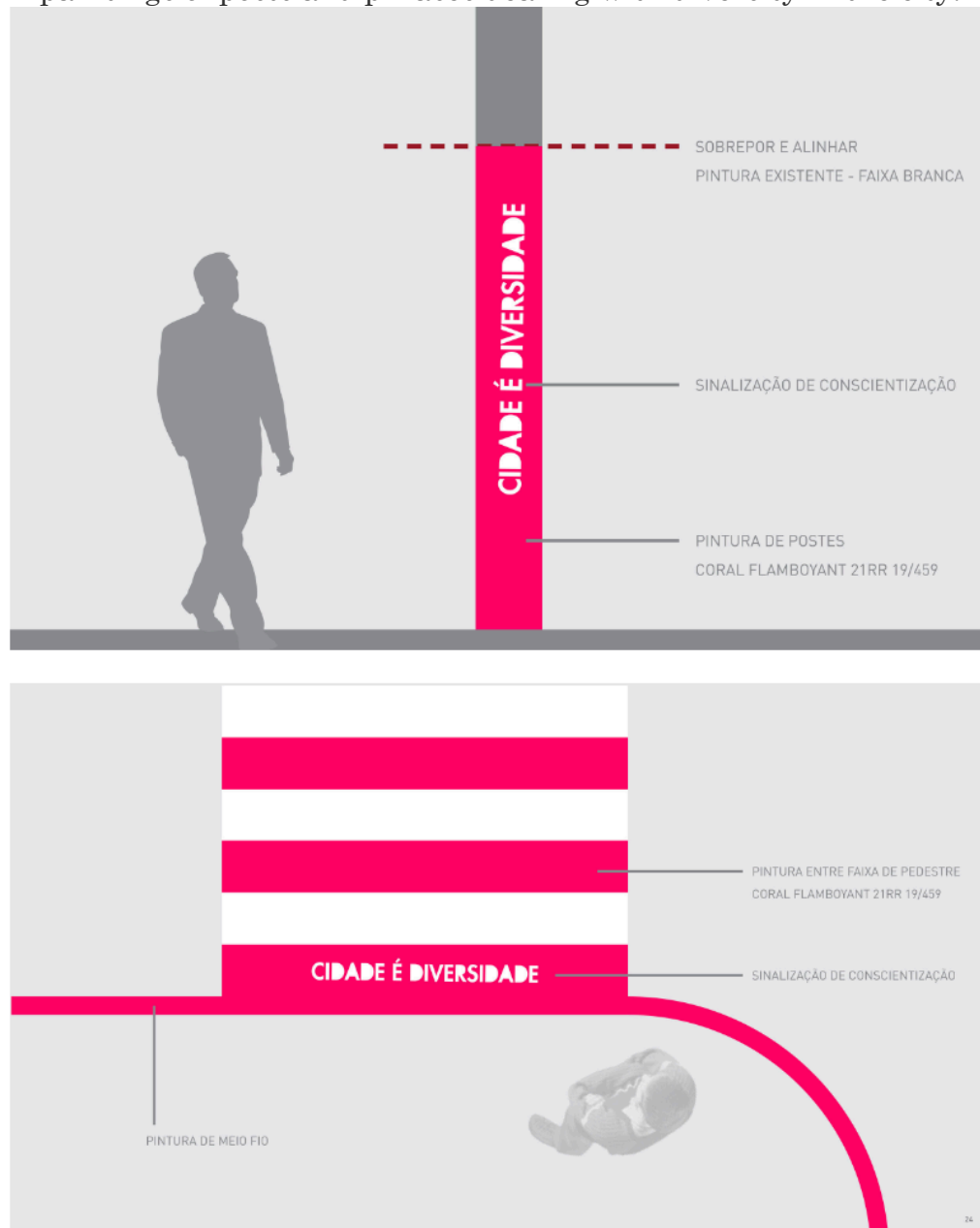
the important architectural heritage of the region, as in the case of the “Edifício Copan” in the background, on the right.

The phrases that appear on the architecture office website within the “Ocupa Rua” page point to a form of project manifest.⁹ Texts such as “A rua é de todos” (“The street belongs to everyone”); “Cidade é diversidade” (“City is diversity”); “Ocupar é resistir” (“Occupying is resisting”) and “Liberdade é respeito” (“Freedom is respect”) were initially created to appear on posts and crosswalks, for example. In the research carried out for this article, none of them were found in the places visited, and there is no justification for not having been used in the public space on the architecture office’s website, on the social networks of “Ocupa Rua” or in any researched publication. It is understood that the city of São Paulo has the “Cidade Limpa” (Clean City) legislation¹⁰, which prohibits a number of uses of public space for advertising, billboards, signs and all kinds of material that the legislation considers “visual pollution”. Therefore, it is possible and likely that these ideas have gone against the current legislation and, therefore, remained in the sphere of the project.

⁹Conforme: www.nitsche.com.br/ocupa-rua

¹⁰Conforme: <http://www.mpsp.mp.br/portal/page/portal/Cartilhas/Lei%20Cidade%20Limpa.pdf>

Image 8 – The image shows some of the visual ideas defined in the “Ocupa Rua” project, such as painting the curb and changing the color of the crosswalks. In the city of São Paulo, the crosswalks are white on black asphalt. In this case, the prediction was to paint the Flamboyant and white bands. There was also the idea of paintings of posts and phrases dealing with diversity in the city.



Source: Available in: <http://www.nitsche.com.br/ocupa-rua>. Access in: 22 Sep. 2021.

“Ocupa Rua” is publicised and promotes itself, in general, with reports in mass media, such as magazines and newspapers and the profile on Instagram. It has no other social media account. The Instagram account itself has 8,000, 851 followers and 91 posts (so far from the making of this text). The hashtag #ocuparua on Instagram

has 1,719 posts (so far from making this text), although not all are related to the project, because hashtags tend to cross-reference information from other content productions. For internet standards, let's face it, it's not an expressive number of followers or publications. However, the visibility of the project seems to come through the formal or informal dissemination of the bars and restaurants that make up the project. These places attract audiences, either for the visibility they have acquired with the work they do and also because they attract a public interested in attending the place. This is ultimately a network of information on the subject, even if informally.

In addition to the commercial objective already mentioned, what “Ocupa Rua” did was to change the “face” of a certain area of the city with a way to receive the public in that region and show that the frequency does not need to be fast or just passing through, but that it can stimulate a coexistence. The coexistence that comes into existence motivated by the project tends to generate a disclosure in which the public itself discloses the place in their own networks of contacts, either through the Internet or at the personal level, for which there is no way to measure in the dimension of this article.

It is believed that this way of living in downtown São Paulo caused by “Ocupa Rua” attributes a new layer, a new “skin” that establishes, with time and use, a “geolocalizable”, with regard to the use of mobile devices and, therefore, a “brand” that becomes the habit of the public, passing through those streets and those facilities, even if informally. From these possibilities it is believed that the behavior of the user of the site and digital media is responsible for new layers of use, or not, of the site. And that he is also, to some extent, responsible for the dissemination of the project.

4. The skins of “Ocupa Rua”

The “Ocupa Rua” is a reality that has brought to the region more than a new business possibility. The pilot project for revitalization¹¹ attributed new layers of

¹¹According to: <https://vejasp.abril.com.br/blog/arnaldo-lorencato/projeto-vai-ocupar-calcadas-e-ruas-mais-largas-do-centro-com-parklets/>

perception about the place and coated the region with what can be established as a relation to the "skins" of the city, from the concepts created by Friedensreich Hundertwasser: epidermis, clothing, home, social identity and the world. A concept of contemporary bias, which can be associated with the ideas of the Austrian architect and artist, who saw the body as an organism of fluid and permeable boundaries, which expand to make up plural instances, in which they confront new thoughts about ethics and collective responsibility placed by it. Hundertwasser himself, in his trajectory, demonstrated how it is possible to be outside the logics imposed by a society to live within its own beliefs through nature and social media, or culture, without disrespecting them. And it is through the experimental possibilities of the five skins that he manifests such ideas.

From this perspective, "Ocupa Rua" seems to engage in a close dialogue with Hundertwasser's concepts. The epidermis that makes up the body of the city can be seen as a renewable layer, which establishes a direct connection between citizens and systems developed to "dress" the city, establishing the connection between humans and ecosystems, forming the culture of the environment and its diversity. This city dressed as people and cultures asserts itself in the social and establishes itself as a home in a physical dimension of urbanity with its structures, systems and irregularities in more or less organic ways, in the spaces built and in the spaces that await or not intervention. The "Ocupa Rua" acts in this frequency of coating the city with new colors, shapes, layers of understanding and perception and is also projected on to a broader action of creating a social identity. The project, when executed, builds layers that will be debugged throughout the processes and transformations through which it will go through. And the element that should contribute to the changes is the individual affected by the project, either by direct use of it – when frequenting the streets, restaurants and bars of the place – or by using the region for work, or some form of leisure, for example, that forces him to be there.

The street is this layer of the city that attracts the walker, it is a place of sociability. In the case of "Ocupa Rua" it provides a sociability reconquered by this regular who walks and who, in a certain way, can be associated with The Flâneur of Walter Benjamin (2007). In the 21st century this individual, who moves through the novelties of contemporary arcades, also moves as a user of mobile devices – mainly

the cell phone – and digital media, bringing with it a technological and social trajectory, the user of devices has aspects of a contemporary media/philosophical subject. The figure of the Flanêur acts as a communicational reference and a kind of springboard or impulse, in the formation of the gaze, of the senses and, especially from Benjamin's perspective, when he points out that:

[...] that anamnestic drunkenness, in which the flanêur wanders through the city, is not nourished only by what passes sensory before his eyes, but often takes possession of simple knowledge, inert data, as of something experienced and lived. This meaning knowledge is transmitted from one person to another, especially orally. (BENJAMIN, 2006, p. 462).

This dimension is a perception derived from the issues discussed in a previous research conducted by this author, which deals with the construction of the look of a media user and who, in this reflection, makes use of such observations and theories to propose a dialogue with Hundertwasser and with the “Ocupa Rua”. And it is based on these questions that we move forward in the present work, with a look focused on the communication experiences of a contemporary time, governed by mobile devices and geolocated movements.

In Paris, the capital of the 19th century, Benjamin speaks of architectural passages as the place of that contemporary moment, which transports the individual to a new era. In the second decade of the 21st century, the passage of new Flanêurs/users is accessible in the “palm of the hand” with technological devices.

Benjamin reflected on walking in the city in economic, cultural, literary, historical and philosophical terms. The concept of Flanêur, the way of being in the city, his long walks through Paris and seeing in the arcades was used a metaphor for the passage of time and for the entry into modernity. In contemporary times, the Flâneur/user has the mobility to move around the environment/city, and communicates with what is momentary, establishing a criterion of transience for a relationship with the ephemeral visibility of social networks.

The uses of technology by the communication subject, especially today, provide a social reformulation with a path that comes from vertical to horizontal technology.¹²

¹²It is known that in the period prior to the Internet of home use and the arrival of social networks, and a participatory policy with regard to the production of content, media technology was provided by media companies to a passive viewer/user. This aspect changes to a technology considered by the media

Today, these fields are widely communicated and are permanently contaminated in a society of sharing and collective or individual work, generating a constant feedback.

Therefore, it is important to pay attention to the hiker who frequents the São Paulo downtown, a diverse place economically and socially. An object is common to a large part of the population that circulates there: the mobile phone – the mobile device with internet access – that allows an intentional geolocation or not, but that marks the region on the city map. In the context of “Ocupa Rua”, the user uses technology, generates new needs and assists in the creation of more technology, which will respond to new questions and needs of other users.

Flanêur/user suggests freedom of movement while gaining access to information in a global sphere. And because it is connected reflects the city on social networks. The user does not necessarily make a critical reading of the environment with reflection in a “Benjaminian” time, but at a new time, current, different from that, because it requires an interaction that happens at another rhythm of sensations and reactions. The fact of using geolocation causes it to establish new sociocultural maps, re-update and resign the passages to a contemporary mode, which uncover a technique and technology to use the new possible universe. The passage was labyrinthine environment, where people were cowering, the new world, as Buck-Morss (2002, p. 306) says.

What the user lets show is that it has already become a mass instrument and exerts an instant role of a social relationship, developing an identity from the acceptance and visibility it receives from the virtual environments it frequents and it is possible to perceive that:

(...) with mobile media, he has the Flâneur's time to enjoy the city – being this city, the city as it is known and, also, the new configurations of environment and nation that can be established from the choice of being connected and in contact. with the virtual environments you want. (...) Like a Flâneur by Walter Benjamin, the user happens in mobility. He moves around the city/location on the move, while navigating the virtual world and absorbing the location he goes through, while consuming the products that are accessible on his media device. On the network, he is

and technology companies themselves as more horizontal, in the sense that the user interacts and interferes in the production of content. Obviously, it is known that technology companies work with the information and attention of users and monetize this content. This discussion goes beyond the limits of this article and there are several studies in the area of attention economics that deal with the subject in depth.

inserted in a context of information production with posts, texts and videos and is visible full time, constantly feeding the network with material produced by him. (ERTHAL, 2018, p. 23).

Today, social networks can be understood as the places where people get into to search for news. The user of downtown São Paulo moves freely, while gaining access to information in a global sphere, enjoys the city with its new skins and, simultaneously, the internet as the new passage, which causes the dazzle, where everyone wants to be. They are layers that overlap simultaneously in the various uses of the city.

Digital network consumption/technology is a constant renewal consumption. The transience and the new configuration brought by “Ocupa Rua” to the São Paulo downtown is what also brings this project closer to Benjamin's ideas. It adds other investment opportunities of what can be understood here as urban activism, as rediscussed by Rena and Arantes, when they say that this contemporary activism is due to the actions of “diverse collectives, social movements, environmental, cultural and neighboring groups, which emerge as activism stifing, bringing the possibility of actively participating in the definitions of the fate of cities” (RENA; ARANTES, 2017, p. 2). As in the following images, it is possible to visualize that, in addition to “Ocupa Rua” there are at least two other parallel actions coming from the private initiative and the public power, which also bring to the region a contribution of options and possibilities of urban zeladoria.

Images 9 and 10 – Photos of pots with plants on one of the corners of the region comprising the “Ocupa Rua”: the action was carried out by the company “Sustentare Saneamento”¹³.



Source: Claudia Erthal and Janice Barcellos (September, 2021).



Source: Claudia Erthal and Janice Barcellos (September, 2021).

¹³According to: www.sustentaresaneamento.com.br

Image 11 – Photo of signs, indicating a fine for discarding garbage on the streets and pointing out nearby recycling points, within the “Revitaliza São Paulo” project¹⁴”.



Source: Claudia Erthal and Janice Barcellos (September, 2021).

The Flâneur/user when he passes through the galleries, through the city unveiled for the look, seizes the information of life and unhides the relationship with the communication act. This saying presupposes the act of being and living communication in its immediate fullness. The narration always comes after the communication act. And it's a way of telling the newly lived gift. Even though all the reports are always below the experiences, as Marcondes Filho emphasizes, the contemporary Flâneur/subject of communication privileges the snapshot at the same moment that he posts and shares the experience in the present in which it happens: "the saying is in the field of experience in act, it is its vibrations, present energies, tensions, frissons, is pure experience, but as such, non-transferable" (MARCONDES FILHO, 2013, p. 69). And it speaks of an impossibility of this fall between the reports and the experiences related to an ethnographic field in relation to the methanopore. With this idea, it shows that the reflection of communication belongs to a past and other ways of communicating and that the act of saying and being said in social networks causes a certain disturbance in this idea.

¹⁴According to:
<https://www.prefeitura.sp.gov.br/cidade/secretarias/subprefeituras/se/noticias/?p=102515>

Human sensitivity changes definitively and technical systems record the world around them and a “specific medial reality becomes alongside a conventional reality” (MARCONDES FILHO, 2013, p. 85). The ever new opportunities are also “images of the desire to overcome the needs of the social product” (ibid., p. 32) with new stimuli. The duration time of current things may seem ephemeral compared to the duration of something in the 19th century, but each speed has its time and produces a strangeness to those who lived in the previous time.

Final considerations

The “Ocupa Rua” began with the economic need to avoid the closure of the activities of commercial establishments, added to the idea of urban transformation. However, it seems to transcend its goal first when we think about the layers it applies on the city and the possibilities it brings to the user, which also makes this place its new place in the city, which frequents the public space and moves through the internet, as it moves through the city. Just as this project provides a new layer and thus a new skin of use of urban public space and the city as a whole, the user/walker seems to enjoy these skins of the city, the new epidermis that constitute a place of being and being, of the look and culture.

Although “Ocupa Rua” does not have any dissemination strategy present in the media, and receives the disclosure from factual reports, the mobile devices that collaborate for the user to reach the site end up registering this demarcation, “geolocating” to such a layer and determining this as a new location. In the algorithmic crossing, the production of content generated by this demarcation or by posts referring to the site, provide sufficient information for other users and create a circulation economy in the region. If the user does not get there via mobile device, he can still make informal disclosure.

The project gains new possibilities of extension when the government decides to incorporate the ideas of the project and create its own project, the “Ruas SP”, taking it to at least another forty streets in different neighborhoods and regions of the city. As a clarification, “Ruas SP” is a project of the City of São Paulo, which also “seeks to support, in an organized and safe way, the recovery of the sector with respect to social

distancing during the pandemic¹⁵". It was started in February 2021 and includes the installation of the project on forty roads of the city, with aesthetic standards different from the "Ocupa Rua", but with the same initial objective and also with the same type of stimulus to coexistence in the areas affected by it.

In addition to the commercial use of the space, "Ocupa Rua" is a project that seems to reach various socioeconomic classes, which represent diverse groups in the city. If put into practice in other regions, and if looked at by a certain perspective, it can contribute in a positive way so that it has the necessary adherence to the place, that the population feels included and does not have it as something strange and false, imposed by the commercial power.

There is a tendency here to think about the use of urban space in a free and democratic way, based on the changes that ideas such as "Ocupa Rua" or "Ruas SP" can generate. They bring a proposal for a modified use of the city, intervening in the surrounding life, an influence that affects and establishes contracts and affective relationships and who knows, in the future, even of history and memory. There is a fact in this context that proves to be inevitable: from the action and intervention in the public space, there is always something to modify, adapt, and depending on the point of view, to improve in such projects. Regardless of the success or failure of each of these practices, stocks in the city will have already been affected and will awaken perspectives, ideas and other new projects. The layers and skins are multiplied by the uses and by the stimuli that offer, at the very least, a change of habits for the existences in this modified environment.

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¹⁵According to: <https://www.capital.sp.gov.br/noticia/projeto-ruas-sp-recebera-propostas-de-bares-e-restaurantes-para-atendimento-ao-publico-em-ruas-e-calcadas>
<https://g1.globo.com/sp/sao-paulo/noticia/2021/04/30/bares-e-restaurantes-da-joao-moura-harmonia-e-mais-40-ruas-de-sp-poderao-ocupar-vagas-para-carros-com-mesas-e-cadeiras.ghtml>

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HOW TO REFERENCE

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