

Cultural heritage and memories of places: convergences and divergences between the legacy of the ‘physical’ sites of memory and the memories of places evoked in the neural architecture

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Halbwachs [9] stated that there is no collective memory that does not occur in a spatial context. He argued that space offers an image of permanence and stability through signs left by social groups. These signs can assist in arousing memories and evoking the past [16] and thus represent valuable testimony since they involve the retrieval of information about people and significant social facts about the groups [11]. In this way, the ‘sites of memory’ [12] can be shaped – places that are appropriated and preserved by the existence of a shared meaning that distinguishes them from others.

At the same time, the ‘physical’ sites of memory are connected to the ‘neurophysiological’ places of memory, described by Damásio [3-5] as ‘convergence-divergence zones’. These zones can be defined as a set of neurons where a large number of handle signals make contact in *feedforward-feedback loops*, which assist the neural architecture responsible for the evocation of memories and hence the recognition of all our surroundings.

This research explores the relationships between people, place and memory and involves discussing the links between the ‘sites of memory’ [9] and the ‘convergence-divergence zone’ [5], which constitute the spaces for images and dispositions that are bound up in the perception and evocation/recognition of fleeting memories, as experienced by the residents [15] of the central district of the town of Campinas - Sao Paulo - Brazil. A field research was carried out with a sample of 266 participants from the central area of this town [1-2;10;13;14], who agreed to take part in interviews and produce drawings on the basis of which it was possible to identify the ‘memories of places’ mediated by the ‘convergence-divergence zones’.

The results [4-7; 14] show the close ties between the individual, the urban/architectural space created and the recognition of the value of the constructed urban identity that is based on the memory that the participants had of their city, cultural heritage, symbolic reference points and representations. These representations provide evidence of a lack of “resonance” [8] between the places of memory that tell the history of Campinas and the memories of places retained by the inhabitants of that city, and underpin the discussions about the way cultural heritage and memory are endowed with legitimacy and preserved in the present.

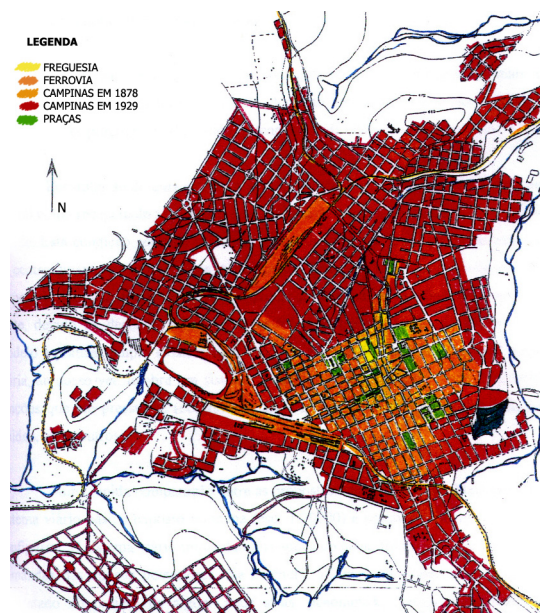


Figure 1: Campinas in 1929. Source: Oliveira, 2012 [13]

Table 1: Answers to the questions of the questionnaire that was applied in the research field study.
Source: Oliveira, 2016 [14]

Questions	Subcategories	Specific Subcategories/ Directions
When one speaks of the center, what is the first thing that comes to your mind?	Religious buildings (18)	Cathedral (14), churches (4).
	Buildings/monuments (8)	Old buildings (4), the demolished theatre (2), the central market (2).
	Others (10)	Tradition/history/cultural heritage (7), childhood (2), trams (1).
What do you most like in the center?	Religious buildings (11)	Cathedral (11).
	Buildings/monuments (12)	Historic building (6), Fepasa Railway Station (4), monuments (2).
	Others (8)	Architecture (7), the railway (1).
What things that have been lost did you like in the Center?	Religious buildings (1)	Igreja do Rosário [Rosário Church] (1).
	Buildings/monuments (10)	Fepasa Railway Station/ passenger trains (3), the Carlos Gomes Theatre (3), the Public Library (1), historic buildings (1), the Hotel Terminus (1), monuments (1).
	Streets/squares (3)	Rua Treze de Maio [13 th May Street] (2), streets with paving stones (1).
	Others (10)	Romanticism (3), traditions (2), history (1), trams (1), the Fountain of Rua Treze de Maio (1), Ezekiel living dead dolls (1), the Umbrellas of Rua Treze de Maio (1).
What would you like to see in the Center?	Buildings/monuments (12)	Buildings/preserved history (9), things as they were in the past (9).
Which spaces/places in the Center do you make most use of?	Religious buildings (11)	Churches (11).
	Buildings/monuments (4)	Centers of culture (4).
	Streets/squares (3)	Areas with shade from trees (3).
What kind of cultural heritage is there in the Center at present?	Religious buildings (122)	Cathedral (90), Churches (20), Rosário Church (2), Universal Church (1).
	Buildings/monuments (169)	Culture of the FEPASA station (30), Palace of Azulejos [glazed tiles] (22), Palace of Jequitibás (19), Jockey Club (12), Statue of Carlos Gomes (12), monuments (11), buildings (10), the Town Market (8), Carlos Gomes College(7), The Forum (5), Museums (5), PUC Central [Catholic University](5), CCLA [Latin American Cultural Center] (4), Carlos Mendes Theater (4), the Post Office (3), MACC Building [Medical/Scientific Computing Center] (3), Health Center (3), Mogiana (2), Headquarters of the Carlos Gomes Band (1), Carlos Salles Monument (1), Giovanetti (1), Niemeyer Building (1).
	Streets/squares (64)	Carlos Gomes Square (24), Community Center (17), Squares (10), Carmo Square/ Bento Quirino Square (5), Rosário Place (3), Jequitibás Wood (2), Pará Place (2), Parks (1).
	Others (16)	Railway (10), Bars (2), Hotels (2), Pedestrian tunnel (1), Bandstand (1).

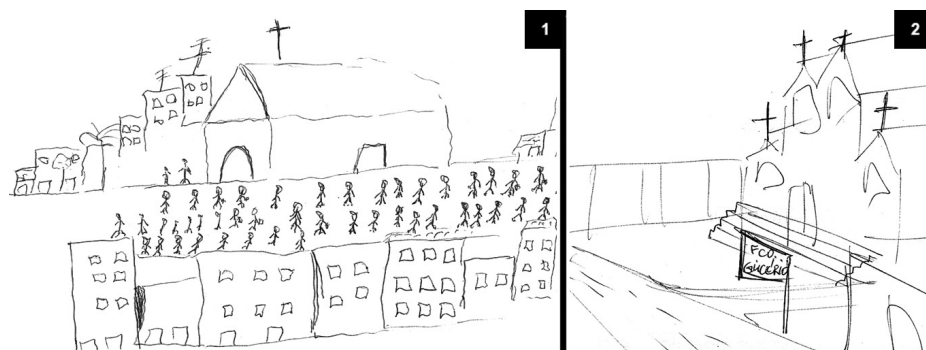


Figure 2: Glicério Avenue: skyline of tall buildings and the Cathedral tower. Source: Oliveira, 2016 [14]

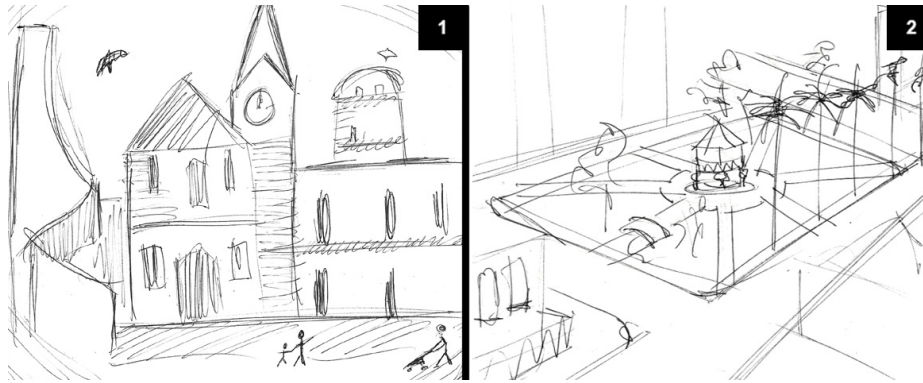


Figure 3: Building of Fepasa Station and its tower with a clock and Carlos Gomes Square with its bandstand and imperious palm trees. Source: Oliveira, 2016 [14]

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