

WHEN THE SOUL OF THE CITY HAS AN ADDRESS: THE *PRAÇA DO AVIÃO* (CANOAS, RS, BRAZIL) AS A TERRITORY OF IDENTITIES, INTANGIBLE HERITAGE AND CULTURAL PEDAGOGIES

Quando a alma da cidade tem endereço:
a Praça do Avião (Canoas, RS, Brasil) como território de identidades, patrimônio imaterial e pedagogias culturais

Cuando el alma de la ciudad tiene una dirección:
Praça do Avião (Canoas, RS, Brasil) como territorio de identidades, patrimonio inmaterial y pedagogías culturales

Jairo Alberto Vieira Schutz

Arquitecto, Magíster en Educación. Universidade Luterana do Brasil (ULBRA). Canoas, Brasil.
jairo.schutz@hotmail.com
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2235-606X>

Ricardo Willy Rieth

Profesor del Programa de Postgrado en Educación (Master / Doctorado). Universidade Luterana do Brasil (ULBRA). Canoas, Brasil.
ricardo.rieth@gmail.com
<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8093-3473>



Upper view of the Praça do Avião and its surroundings.
Source: Tony Capellão

Article based on a research project and dissertation by Jairo AV SCHUTZ, Pedagogies and cultural representations associated with the Praça do Avião, cultural heritage of Canoas, RS, presented to the Postgraduate Program in Education (Master / Doctorate) of the Lutheran University of Brazil (ULBRA), Canoas, RS, Brazil, in 2019.

ABSTRACT

This paper addresses meanings produced and attributed to a public space of the city of Canoas, RS, popularly referred to as “Praça do Avião” or Aviation Square, a reference not just for the city and its people, but also for the Metropolitan Region of Porto Alegre, RS, Brazil. It is based on the research titled “Pedagogias culturais, representações e identidades: a Praça do Avião, patrimônio cultural imaterial de Canoas, RS” (Schutz, 2019). In the last one hundred years, inhabitants, citizens, outsiders, politicians, the military, governments, the press and organized civilian social movements have given multiple meanings and representations to this square, making it evident that it is in no way stable or immutable, but under an ongoing permanent and dynamic transformation and, becoming a territory of conflict. Methodologically, an analysis from the field of Cultural Studies was applied, taking as artifacts, documents and images from collections in local archives, libraries and public organizations, publications in both digital and analog media, in addition to on-site observations. The militarization process of the urban space of Canoas was a key element in the historical narrative, built through marked interventions by the Brazilian air force, *Força Aérea Brasileira* (FAB), with *Praça do Avião* as its symbolic epicenter, especially during the second half of the 20th century, with far-reaching consequences until contemporary times. The analysis focuses on the explanation of the circulation and negotiation of representations and recurring identities, associated with this immaterial cultural heritage, and its role in the context of pedagogies linked to it.

Keywords: *Praça do Avião*, urban space, cultural heritage, urban heritage, cultural identity

RESUMO

O presente artigo aborda significados atribuídos a um espaço público produzido e transformado em referencial para Canoas, RS, bem como para a Região Metropolitana de Porto Alegre, RS, Brasil: a Praça do Avião. Apoiar-se de modo especial na pesquisa intitulada *Pedagogias culturais, representações e identidades: a Praça do Avião, patrimônio cultural imaterial de Canoas, RS* (Schutz, 2019). Nos últimos cem anos, habitantes, cidadãos, forasteiros, políticos, militares, governos, imprensa e movimentos da sociedade civil organizada produziram múltiplos sentidos e representações associados a esta praça, deixando evidente tratar-se de um espaço de modo algum estável ou imutável, mas em dinâmica e permanente transformação, acima de tudo, um território de conflito. Metodologicamente, aplicou-se uma análise do campo dos Estudos Culturais, tomando como artefatos documentos e imagens de acervos em arquivos, bibliotecas e órgãos públicos locais, matérias publicadas em mídia impressa e digital, além de observações in loco. Central na narrativa histórica construída foi o processo de militarização do espaço urbano de Canoas, por intervenção da Força Aérea Brasileira, tendo como epicentro simbólico a Praça do Avião, especialmente durante a segunda metade do século XX, com decorrências profundas até a contemporaneidade. A análise privilegia a explicitação da circulação e negociação de representações e identidades recorrentes, associadas a este patrimônio cultural imaterial e seu papel no âmbito de pedagogias a ele vinculadas.

Palavras Chave: *Praça do Avião*, espaço urbano, patrimônio cultural, patrimônio urbano e identidade cultural

RESUMEN

El artículo aborda significados producidos y atribuidos a un espacio público de la ciudad de Canoas, llamada popularmente *Praça do Avião*, una referencia no solo para la ciudad y su población sino que para la Región Metropolitana de Porto Alegre, RS, Brasil. Está embasado en la investigación bajo el título “*Pedagogias culturais, representações e identidades: a Praça do Avião, patrimônio cultural imaterial de Canoas, RS*” (Schutz, 2019). A lo largo de cien años, habitantes, ciudadanos, forasteros, políticos, militares, gobiernos, la prensa y movimientos organizados de la sociedad civil han producido múltiples significados y representaciones sobre la plaza, lo que demuestra no ser ella estable ni inmutable, siguiendo en transformación dinámica y permanente, presentándose como territorio de conflicto. Metodológicamente, se realizó un análisis desde el campo de los Estudios Culturales, tomando como artefactos documentos e imágenes de colecciones y archivos locales, bibliotecas y agencias públicas, artículos publicados en medios impresos y digitales, además de observaciones in situ. El proceso de militarización del espacio urbano de Canoas fue un elemento central en la narrativa histórica construída bajo la destacada participación de la *Força Aérea Brasileira*, con la *Praça do Avião* como su epicentro simbólico, especialmente durante la segunda mitad del siglo XX, con profundas consecuencias hasta el día de hoy. El análisis está centrado en la explicación de la circulación y negociación de representaciones e identidades recurrentes, asociadas con este patrimonio cultural inmaterial y su papel en el contexto de las pedagogías a él vinculadas.

Palabras Clave: *Praça do Avião*, espacio urbano, patrimonio cultural, patrimonio urbano e identidad cultural

INTRODUCTION

Figure 1

The Plane Square
Source: Jairo Schutz
Jairo, Ricardo Rieth



Figure 2

Placement of the Airplane monument, having in the background the old INSS building
Source: Photo 01289 - Municipal Historical Archive Collection Dr. Sezefredo Azambuja Vieira



The public space is of a collective possession, destined for common use, like streets, squares, parks, avenues, among others, where inhabitants and visitors move around freely. These can be open or closed spaces. Many of these places, sometimes forgotten by civil servants, are either designed to satisfy individual instead of collective wishes or are built giving privilege to cars and not to pedestrians. Rethinking these spaces, adapting them to the needs of the current inhabitants, or simply resignifying them, is the role of architecture, necessary for them to have new appropriations.

This article is fundamentally based on the research called *Pedagogias culturais, representações e identidades: a Praça do Avião, patrimônio cultural imaterial de Canoas, RS* (Cultural teachings, representations and identities: *Praça do Avião*, immaterial cultural heritage of Canoas, RS) (SCHUTZ, 2019). Its goal was to specifically research the practices, uses and representations of Santos Dumont Square, commonly known as *Praça do Avião* or Aviation Square, in Canoas, RS [Figure 1]. It has a privileged location, located alongside the BR-116 highway, one of the busiest highways in the country, with the backdrop of the old *National Social Security Institute* (INPS in Portuguese), already a landmark when the monument was inaugurated until today, as the *Basic Health Unit*, that is found in the same building [Figure 2].

In 1958, this space was already a square, gaining a greater importance in 1968, when it received a monument: an English warplane, a *Gloster Meteor*, donated to the council by the Brazilian Air Force, after being retired in 1966. The square is mainly associated to the presence of the Air Base and of the military in the city. Passersby are permanently warned or reminded about the presence of Air Force officers in the city.

Canoas is part of the metropolitan region of Porto Alegre, in Rio Grande do Sul, with 323,827 inhabitants and a surface area of 131.1 km², according to the 2010 census of the *Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics* (IBGE in Portuguese), and since the founding as an urban settlement, which began in 1871, the city has some marked phases in its social imaginary. "Vacation city", "commuter city" and "industrial city" are three characterizations proposed by researchers, with the second being the most recurrent and remembered. Municipal urbanization took place based on the transformation of large pieces of land of the *Fazenda do Gravataí*, acquired by wealthy families in Porto Alegre, who built their summer homes there (JAEGER, 2018, p.14). Little by little, it abandoned its agricultural and vacationing role, becoming a commuter and industry city. The march of urbanization brought homes and neighborhoods without a suitable planning. The urban subdivisions, awoken by the interests of the merchants, were quickly installed (PENNA, CORBELLINI & GAYESKI, 2004, p.23).

If the square is the town's stage, the lead of its own shows, then it is a public meeting space, built for and by the society, infused with symbols and meanings, key landmarks in the formation of paths, of coming and going, of arriving and leaving, concentration and spreading. A pedestrian space – a representative stage of the cultural and historic dimension of the city (FONT, 2003, p.5).

Civic acts, demonstrations, protests, practices and marches of entities, gatherings of religious groups, popular celebrations and school visits occurred and continue to do so there, defining the territory and its ties, thus being subject to defense. These practices reflect diverse contents and means of spreading knowledge, in other words, they correspond to cultural teachings. They teach cultural practices beyond formal education spaces, that guide, set up and govern bodies, that propose to subjects, ways of being and acting within a network of meanings that connect culture and power (ANDRADE; COSTA, 2015). This territory, through the senses and

METHODOLOGY

Figure 3

The Plane Square,
the BR-116 and its
surroundings
Source: Canoas City
Hall -2019



representations attributed to it, becomes a landmark, an anchor for different groups and the for the urban community as a whole. Observing and crossing through the fabric of this network implies an attempt to understand that place as a territory formed dialectically by spatial and cultural dimensions. A place that transcends its physical structure, while supporting a torrent of meanings.

We aim at verifying how the production, mediation, circulation and consumption of representations, by the different subjects and groups involved, and the multiple senses attributed to *Praça do Avião*, are constituted, manifested and can be analyzed, understanding this whole set as immaterial cultural heritage, through the practices carried out there, from the 1960s to the present day. Which representations are associated to the plane, that rests on a concrete pedestal and has had the starring role in the square between 1968 and 2019?

To make this document-based research, combined with observations, notes and later analysis from different viewpoints, information was gathered from texts, books, magazines and newspapers of the *João Palma da Silva Municipal Public Library*, in Canoas, along with articles, thesis projects and dissertations that were looked through in the franchised files of the international computer network. Regarding the events related to the Square, data was collated together with the Secretariats of Culture and Tourism (SMCT) and Education (SME). We see their players and occupations on different days and times. Another source was the news articles published in the local newspaper, *O Timoneiro*, founded in 1966, even from before the inauguration of *Praça do Avião*, but without ignoring what was reported in other newspapers, be these currently in circulation or not.

We share research interests and motivations of authors who discuss the issue of urban spaces and their collective uses. By walking by *Praça do Avião* and seeing the movement in its immediate surroundings, the confirmation of how “the space has become a passing place, measured by the ease with which we walk through it or we walk away from it” is awoken. The experience of the visitor to the square contrasts radically with that of the individual who drives by or is a passenger in cars, buses or trucks for whom “the urban space loses all its appeal [...], who just want to pass through and are not excited by it” (SENNETT, 2008). For decades, *Praça do Avião* has been attractive for the inhabitants of Canoas because it is close to the city center, and the main resources, services and alternatives, be this in the public or private sector. For them, going from neighborhoods to the “center promised a horizon of wishes and dangers, the exploration of a territory that was always different” (SARLO, 1997). In recent times, this has profoundly changed, due to the decentralization of offers into small “centers” in the neighborhoods and by the spread of shopping centers; Canoas has two (Canoas Shopping and Park Shopping Canoas), along many more in the Metropolitan Region of Porto Alegre. The shopping center has become today’s public square, and almost every one of them has a cinema, restaurants, stores, and indoor amusement parks (SARLO, 2014). A space where some of the minimum requirements of the city are ensured: order, clarity, cleanliness, and safety, which for different reasons were no longer present in the center of Canoas, even in *Praça do Avião* [Figure 3].

Among the academic works reviewed, it is possible to highlight those that sought to understand the public spaces of Canoas from the perspective of its population. In one of these, 115 people were interviewed, 83% of them residents and 17% visitors. *Praça do Avião* is the place that most and best represents the image of the city for those interviewed. In the general context of public highways, the BR 116 highway is identified as the most relevant. It

Figure 4

The square and at the bottom the BR-116
 Source: Jairo Schutz
 Jairo, Ricardo Rieth



RESULTS

CANOAS, ITS ORIGINS, AND THE SQUARES

Figure 5

Old Canoas Station in the year 1874
 Source: book
 Caminhos de Ferro do Rio Grande do Sul,
 J. R. Souza Dias,
 1987



1 Name of a person born in the city of Canoas.

was noted in the answers that the built cultural heritage has no relevance in the imagination of the people of Canoas. Another identity of Canoas was revealed, of the “pass through city”, due to the great number of daily pendular movements made in the Metropolitan Region, along the BR-116 highway and the surface train, *Trensurb*, that divide the city’s territory into three main areas. With this, the elements along these roads gain strength in the construction of the identity (BECKER; PEREIRA, 2019).

With the locomotion’s technology, also towards the outskirts, the space turned into a passageway, because of how easy it is to get there and to leave from there (SENNETT, 2008). On this passageway, in front of the airplane monument, it is possible to contemplate a military artifact, a symbol of warning, of readiness, so that, at any time, once the command is given, it takes off, no longer being an ornament, but becoming once more, a warplane. It is possible to see a panorama of relations between several territories, different subjects, within the same city and verify the interrelations that permeate the collective experience in this urban space [Figure 4].

In the following sections, we address Canoas, its origins, the importance of the Brazilian Air Force for the city, the militarization of the square and, finally, we present some results that will support the hypothesis that public spaces, if necessary, can be resignified.

The railroad that would unite São Leopoldo and Porto Alegre, passing through Canoas, represented an important milestone for the city. The same can be said today regarding *Trensurb*, a surface train implemented in 1985. Construction began on November 26th, 1871, ending 3 years later, on April 14th, 1874. Canoas grew around the train station, when it still belonged to the municipalities of Gravataí and São Sebastião do Caí. In that same year, the opening of the first subdivision, next to the local station, took place. [Figure 5].

In 1935, the Regional Air Command – COMAR – was set up in Canoas and the emancipation process, the long-yearned desire of the *Canoenses*¹. progressed quickly due to the influence of the Brazilian Air Force (FAB). Emancipated on June 27th, 1989 by State Decree N° 7839, the city was set up on January 15th, 1940, date which is commemorated by the name of the city center’s main street. Edgar Braga da Fontoura became the first Mayor of the city, with 40,128 inhabitants.

Since its foundation, administrators have had to resolve many issues with urban infrastructure, working neighborhoods were built, many in areas that were often likely to be flooded. The Sinos and Gravataí rivers bathe the shorelines of Canoas, and it is in the Jacuí Delta area, as well as having many streams and lakes around its urban limits. Canoas, on being low-lying, is prone to floods. The first two mayors tried to mobilize the influential merchants and politicians of the time to develop a civic center farther from the railroad and the highway, to place it on higher land, away from the marshlands. The established economic and political leaders, considering that the site of its historic origin was there, went against the petition, under the influence of the railroad and civic center. This fact led Edgar Braga da Fontoura to present his resignation from his position in his first year as mayor.

Aluizio Palmeiro Escobar (1941-1945) saw his administration marked by great floods in April and May 1941. He supported the new subdivisions, starting to prepare construction plans and work codes looking not just to face the flooding issues, but the future growth of the city. In 1946, the third mayor, Nelson Paim Terra, bought the lot between the current streets of Ipiranga and Frei Orlando, from Victor Barreto Avenue until the BR-116, to install the civic center. In 1948, the area was divided up and opened into XV de Janeiro

Figure 6

The Emancipation Square

Source: Jairo Schutz
Jairo, Ricardo Rieth



Street, and the construction of the local government building also began. The area in front of this was destined to the construction of the future square that would be called *Praça da Emancipação*, or Emancipation Square, (PREFEITURA MUNICIPAL DE CANOAS, 2019) [Figure 6].

This block would become the new civic center, answering part of the demands of the merchants and ultimately archiving the plans of the first mayors, Edgar Braga da Fontoura and Aloízio Palmeiro de Escobar, in the past. Far from the polemic about the civic center, another square stood out, *Praça do Avião*, as it is commonly known, but whose official name is *Praça Santos Dumont*, with a war “plane” as a monument. In truth, since 1958, the same year of the inauguration of *Praça da Emancipação*, it was called *Praça Cinquentenário La Salle*, in reference to the arrival, presence and actions of the La Salle brotherhood in Canoas.

In the period of mayor José João de Medeiros (1960-1963), investments on a broad construction plan were prioritized. At the same time, important heavy transformational industries were set up in the city, along with the largest of all the companies, the Alberto Pasqualini Refinery (HISTÓRIA DOS NOSSO PREFEITOS, 2005). It started its operations in 1968, as a business unit of PETROBRAS – *Petróleo Brasileiro S.A.*, an open capital company, whose majority shareholder is the Federal Government, thus being a mixed economy state company.

The newspaper, *O Timoneiro* printed their first issues of 1968 with several mentions of *Praça do Avião* in their headlines. In the week of January 17th to January 24th, 1968, the front page was covered with the news that the *Monumento à Aviação*, which would be located at *Praça Cinquentenário La Salle*, would be finished within the month. The Gloster Meteor craft was given by the Canoas Air Base after having completed 21,838 flight hours. With this transfer, a contract was signed that would make the City responsible for keeping the turbine and exhaust lights lit. The Air Base agreed to perform an annual maintenance of its old heritage.

In the next issue, for the week of January 24th to January 31st, 1968, *O Timoneiro* published a piece about the inauguration of the monument. At that time, according to the weekly, Lagranha, the incumbent mayor, had said “*that this will be the most important point of tourism for our city*”; he also remembered the friendly ties there were between civilians and the military in the city. Brigadier Nei Gomes da Silva recalled the achievements of the Gloster Meteor, calling it a “hero” with many flight hours, that was abandoning the skies to remain in everyone’s memory. He stated that the “*monument is a symbol of the FAB’s love for Canoas*”.

Nine years after the square’s inauguration, the newspaper, *Fato Ilustrado* informed that, on October 21st, 1977, in the celebration of Air Force Week, the square would change its name to Alberto Santos Dumont Square, as a result of the bill of councilman Mussoline La Roque da Quadros. The news story also commented that “*for the hearts of the most sentimental, it would still be called Praça do Avião*”.

Jeison Silva, from the newspaper, *Diário de Canoas*, on April 20th, 2019, anticipating the issues related with the 80th anniversary of the emancipation of Canoas, wrote that this is a city whose name is connected to a ship, but its inspiration came through the air. He plays with the fact that a city, which takes the name of a type of common vessel from the olden days, chose an airplane as its symbol. He highlighted that the arrival of the Brazilian Air Force, deliberately using a pun, divided the waters for the development of Canoas. There would be nothing fairer than immortalizing this connection with the city.

The movements, negotiations, and fights regarding the names of the square, be these official or popular, reflect the appearance of new meanings, the questioning of symbols and the shocks to the iconic architecture of the established models.

THE BRAZILIAN AIR FORCE IN CANOAS AND THE MILITARIZATION OF THE SQUARE

We now address certain aspects of FAB's history, its origins, and the installation of the military base in the city of Canoas. At the beginning of the 1950s, the FAB lost more ground every year; in terms of the quality and depreciation of its equipment, a trend that coincided with the modernization process of air forces of neighboring countries. In an effort for technological renewal, in 1953, 60 Meteor FMk8 and 10 Meteor TMk7 Biplane aircraft were bought from England, in exchange for 15,000 tons of cotton, bringing Brazil into the era of jet aviation. The FAB, due to its importance for the history of Brazilian military aviation, began to present air bases and public entities with "modified" versions of the Meteor, after its retirement, to act as adornments.

The FAB's base came to Canoas after 1938, under the command of Captain Miguel Lampert. Among the many complications that arose from the start of the military unit's administration, was the distance to the municipal buildings, at the time in Gravataí. Lampert met with the regiment's officers in his office to look at the steps they would take. 3 possible solutions were discussed: 1) transfer of the municipality from the town of Gravataí to Canoas; 2) annexing the territory of Canoas to the municipality of Porto Alegre; 3) emancipation of the territory of Canoas, turning it into a municipality with the annexation of Santa Rita dos Sinos, which back then was a rural district of São Sebastião do Caí. This last alternative was considered the most reasonable, as it was a long-lasting wish of the citizens of Canoas. Vitor Hugo Ludwig, a Canoas doctor, was invited to lead the emancipatory process, on having been the mayor of Gravataí and, as such, knowledgeable regarding local administrative issues, as well as having great prestige in the *Canoense* civil sphere (SILVA, 1989).

Today, whoever sits on a bench in *Praça do Avião*, sponsored by *Casa Yole*, a traditional store in Canoas in the 1960s, can go back in time. Contemplating a warplane, installed there in 1968, lets us remember the so-called "Years of Lead". Memories hark back to the Military Government period, between 1964 and 1985, and especially to the exacerbation of authoritarianism phase, starting from 1968, with the suppression of individual rights and the political radicalization in Brazil. It is possible to think about the historic circumstances of a military plane, placed in a public square, in a city declared as a national security area, where the mayor was not elected by popular vote, but rather assigned by comptrollers, where individual freedoms, constitutional principles and the civil code had their principles suspended.

With the resignation of President Jânio Quadros in 1961, military sectors tried to impede that the Vice-President, João Belchior Marques Goulart, assumed the Presidency. This man, known popularly as Jango, was on an official visit to China. Suspected because of his political background, it was alleged that his taking over would jeopardize national security, associating Jango with the threat of installing communism in Brazil. In 1964, the regime that brought down President João Goulart, closed radio and television stations, making censorship a common practice. The Legality Campaign took place during this period, a movement organized by several politicians, sympathizers of Jango. The plane viewed by those sitting on the square's bench was taken to form a squadron, put on alert for a possible attack on the Piratini Palace, the seat of Government in the State of Rio Grande do Sul, to repress the Legality movement (CALIXTO, 2011).

Ney de Moura Calixto, then a sergeant and pilot at the Air Base, cousin of the then Governor of Rio Grande do Sul, Leonel de Moura Brizola, inhabitant of a functional residence, became the star when he and other sergeants aborted the takeoff of the Gloster Meteor raid, that would bomb

DISCUSSION

PRAÇA DO AVIÃO AS IMMATERIAL CULTURAL HERITAGE

the city of Porto Alegre, on the order of the Minister of War, with the intention of silencing the network for legality (CALIXTO, 2011). What would the plane represent in the square? Would it be a permanent warning of the mayor and the FAB to the population that, in this square, where a warplane rests, as testimony of the military presence in the city, that no war would be fought?

For Françoise Choay, the word heritage was initially linked to family and economic structures, being later reclassified by several adjectives. Today, it has taken on new connotations. According to the author:

The expression designates a good destined to the usufruct of a community which has expanded to planetary dimensions, built by the continuous accumulation of a diversity of objects that come together because of their common past: works and masterpieces of fine and applied arts, works and products of all knowledge and savoir-faire of human beings (CHOAY, 2017).

Thus heritage, according to its particularity and significant form of expression, is cataloged as cultural, determining its safeguarding (protection), to ensure its continuity and conservation (idem, ibidem).

In the city of Canoas, the role of managing the historic, artistic, and cultural heritage falls upon the Municipal Culture and Tourism Secretary (SMCT). It was only from 1993, that *Canoense* society began to formally become concerned about their cultural assets. A late movement, when compared to Porto Alegre, which passed its Organic Law in 1971 and, in article 117, already determined the raising of cultural assets for the purposes of future protection and declaration of public usefulness (GRAEBIN, GRAEFF & GRACIANO (2014, p.3).

Law N°3,875, from August 10th, 1994, sets the protection of municipal historic and artistic heritage. This is the first municipal legal registry where matters of heritage are set out, although buildings are not listed. The 2008 Master Plan, Law N°5,341, superseded by Law N°5,961 of 2015, in turn, was the first to present matters of heritage interest, which is left clear in its art. 5, directive XIII – protection, conservation and recovery of the natural and built environment, the cultural, historic, artistic, landscape and archaeological heritage, as well as the creation of Zones of Special Cultural Interest (ZEIC in Portuguese), which are areas that see the presence of cultural heritage that is representative of the culture and the history of the city (PREFEITURA MUNICIPAL DE CANOAS, 2008).

The expression of immaterial cultural assets refers to those practices and domains of social life that are manifested in knowledge, artisanry, ways of doing, celebrations, forms of scenic, plastic, musical or ludic expression and in places (like markets, fairs and sanctuaries that house collective cultural practices), that the communities, groups and individuals recognize as an integral part of their cultural heritage. This definition follows the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, ratified by Brazil in March 2006, according to the *Institute of Historic and Artistic Heritage* (IPHAN, s.d.).

We characterize *Praça do Avião* as immaterial cultural heritage because cultural practices are symbolically built. Civic acts, demonstrations, protests, practices and marches of entities, gatherings of religious groups, popular celebrations and visits of schoolchildren happen there, which end up defining territories and their ties, and as such it is susceptible to being defended [Figure 7]. *Praça do Avião* is still not registered as protected cultural



Figure 7

The square being used as a protest site
 Source: Rita Garrido / STIMMEC and Diário de Canoas

heritage. Conceptually, the first square protected as immaterial heritage of humanity, according to Pelegrini and Funari (2013) was *Fna Djamaa*, the main square in the city of Marrakech. For centuries, it has been the meeting point of country folk and merchants in the Atlas mountainous region and the south of Morocco. A place which is no longer a gathering point, a geographic landmark, but rather a cultural landmark in Marrakech. Stuart Hall (2015) highlights the constitutive power of language and cultural representations, that not only “speak about”, but rather build and invent the things and subjects they speak about. Hall considers that the meanings which circulate in culture, challenge the subjects and contribute to the construction of their subjectivities and identities, and conceive cultural identity as a historic construction of real, material and symbolic effects, constituting a positioning of the social players.

In August 2018, around 100 Year-4 students from the Paulo Freire Municipal Primary School (EMEF), from the Guajuviras neighborhood, one of the most populous and poorest of the city, visited the historic sites of Canoas, including *Praça do Avião*. In a later conversation with the students, they said that “they had been to Canoas”. In this way, heading downtown is the equivalent of going to another city. There is no belonging regarding *Praça do Avião* and downtown. Although they are neighborhoods of the same city, there is a strong contrast between the territory of Guajuviras and the territory of *Praça do Avião*.

The newspaper, *Diário de Canoas* published, on January 22nd, 2018, a report under the title “*Flight is only in the imagination*”. Lauro Bittencourt was interviewed, who at that time had been working for 29 years next to the square. “I think that this is the most important landmark of Canoas. Whether to say that what you’re looking for is far or close to the airplane”, Bittencourt said.

The square and its individual or collective subjects express a setting of negotiation, a field of dispute both from the material and discourse points of view. It is a negotiated, constituted space, used by heterogeneous groups and partial publics. We realize that the “belonging” and “identity” are not rock-solid, are not guaranteed for life, are very negotiable and revocable, and that the decisions the individual makes, the roads they take, the way they act, and the determination of remaining firm facing all this, are crucial factors both for the “belonging” and for the “identity” (BAUMAN, 2005, p.17).

The square is used, from the past until today, when showing a speaking place is sought. Often, the city’s main events have been held in *Praça do Avião*. In newspaper, radio, television and on the Internet, the spatial reference to *Praça do Avião* is constantly used as a resource to facilitate the event’s location, or the situation being referred to, by the receiving public. The city and its public spaces are neither static nor immutable, but rather they permanently assume new meanings produced by their inhabitants and visitors.

PRAÇA DO AVIÃO RESIGNIFIED

Canoas is a city that has four monuments with planes, spread over different neighborhoods. The most relevant is *Praça do Avião*. Much more than a symbol, the plane in the square represents the decisive participation of officers linked to the Air Base and to V COMAR (today, ALA 3), in the political and social life of Canoas, since their arrival in 1937. The presence of military in the town is seen at different times, be this in official acts or celebrations, for example, when the military barracks open their doors to receive the population, especially children and young people, in an act for Children's Day, celebrated on October 12th in Brazil. Alongside this, reference is also made to *Semana da Asa*, when Alberto Santo Dumont, the father of aviation, the FAB and aviation in general are commemorated. Their influence is not limited to the flybys of jets that plough the skies or to the monuments of planes spread throughout the city. Currently, they are commemorated with names of streets, schools, and squares (FAB, 2019).

It is common to find records of the square being used as a space for contemplation, emotional experiences, and the exchange of experiences. Several of these uses, common in the past, seem to have been abandoned. However, *Praça do Avião* still is requested as a meeting place, as well as to promote demonstrations and protests (SCHUTZ, 2019).

The spaces of *Praça do Avião*, as well as the buildings around it, have seen changes over half a century. In this context, there is a need to evaluate actions used to preserve the urban centers, in order to identify conservation practices that allow the development of social actions, like the promotion of cultural, leisure and other activities, conciliating the urban growth and the conservation of the history and memory of the spaces of the city.

During the research, we checked the use of this space for festive dates, seeing, for example, the ornamentation of the Christmas celebrations. The use continues to be paradoxical, as an artifact of war, attacks and the extermination of life is associated with a celebration of renewed hope. However, where else in the city would this initiative stand out?

Among the square's benches, there are remains of the inauguration times, in 1958, when it was called *Cinquentenário La Salle*. They are identifiable from the announcements sponsored by local merchants. In the center of it all, the war plane, itself a commemorative landmark in the life of civilians and the military, heroes of battles, personalities and anonymous users, a reference landmark in the permanent traffic and negotiation of teachings, representations and meanings around the square, the city and the region.

BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

- ANDRADE, P. D. de; COSTA, M. V. (2015) "Usos e possibilidades do conceito de pedagogias culturais nas pesquisas em estudos culturais em educação". Revista Textura, v.17, n.34, p. 48-63. Disponível em: <http://www.periodicos.ulbra.br/index.php/txra/article/view/1501> Acesso em: 15/06/2020.
- BAUMAN, Z. (2005) Identidade: entrevista a Benedetto Vecchi. Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar.
- BRASIL. Decreto Lei nº 25 de 30 de novembro de 1937. Organiza a proteção do patrimônio histórico e artístico nacional. Disponível em: http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/Decreto-Lei/Del0025.htm. Acesso em: 17 nov. 2019.
- CALIXTO, N. de M. (2011) Os sargentos da Legalidade. Canoas: Sec. Municipal da Cultura e do Turismo.
- CÂMARA DE VEREADORES. Lei Orgânica do município de Porto Alegre. Porto Alegre: Câmara de Vereadores, 1971. Art. 117.
- CANOAS. Lei nº 3875, de 10 de agosto de 1994. Organiza A Proteção do Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico Municipal. Canoas, RS. Disponível em: <https://leismunicipais.com.br/a1/rs/c/canoas/lei-ordinaria/1994/388/3875/lei-ordinaria-n-3875-1994-organiza-a-protecao-do-patrimonio-historico-e-artistico-municipal?q=3875>. Acesso em: 8 set. 2019.
- CANOAS. Lei nº 5341, de 22 de outubro de 2008. Institui o Plano Diretor Urbano ambiental de Canoas, dispõe sobre o desenvolvimento urbano no município de Canoas e dá outras providências. Canoas, RS. Disponível em: <https://c-mara-municipal-de-canoas.jusbrasil.com.br/legislacao/311749/lei-5341-08>. Acesso em: 17 nov. 2019.
- CANOAS. Lei nº 5961, de 11 de dezembro de 2015. Institui o Plano Diretor Urbano Ambiental de Canoas, dispõe sobre o Desenvolvimento Urbano no município e dá outras providências. Canoas, RS. Disponível em: <https://leismunicipais.com.br/a/rs/c/canoas/lei-ordinaria/2015/596/5961/lei-ordinaria-n-5961-2015-institui-o-plano-diretor-urbano-ambiental-de-canoas-dispoe-sobre-o-desenvolvimento-urbano-no-municipio-e-da-outras-providencias>. Acesso em: 17 nov. 2019.
- CANOAS. Prefeitura Municipal. Canoas, 2010. Disponível em: <https://oldsite.canoas.rs.gov.br/index.php/site/noticia/visualizar/idDep/25/id/110424>. Acesso em: 10 set. 2019.
- CANOAS. Prefeitura Municipal. Canoas, 2019. Disponível em: <https://www.canoas.rs.gov.br/sobre-canoas>. Acesso em: 27 nov. 2018.
- CANOAS. Prefeitura Municipal. Canoas, 2018. Disponível em: <https://www.canoas.rs.gov.br/noticias/alunos-da-escola-paulo-freire-visitam-pontos-historicos-de-canoas>/<https://www.canoas.rs.gov.br/noticias/alunos-da-escola-paulo-freire-visitam-pontos-historicos-de-canoas/>. Acesso em: 27 ago. 2018.
- CHOAY, F. (2017) *Alegoria do patrimônio*. 6. ed. São Paulo: Estação Liberdade/ Ed. Unesp. 288 p.
- DIÁRIO DE CANOAS (22 janeiro 2018) O voo é só na imaginação. Canoas. Disponível em: <https://www.diariodecanoas.com.br/2018/01/noticias/regiao/2227077-o-voo-e-so-na-imaginacao.html>. Acesso em: 06 maio 2019.
- FAB - ALA 3 - *Comando de preparo*. Disponível em: <http://www2.fab.mil.br/ala3/index.php/ultimas-noticias/272-expoair-2019>. Acesso em: 13 out. 2019.
- FATO ILUSTRADO. (27 outubro 1977) A Praça do Avião tem novo nome: Alberto Santos Dumont. Canoas.
- FONT, M. (2003) A praça em movimento: processos de transformações

- morfológicas e funcionais no Brasil do século XX. [Dissertação de Mestrado Universidade de São Paulo].
- MEDEIROS, J. J. (2005) *História de nossos prefeitos – volume 6*. Canoas: Prefeitura Municipal de Canoas.
- GRAEBIN, C. M. G.; GRAEFF, L.; GRACIANO, S. S. (2014) Da residência da Família Ludwig à Casa das Artes: trajetória do primeiro patrimônio tombado de Canoas (RS). *Revista Memória em Rede* v. 4, n. 10. Pelotas: UFPEL.
- HALL, S. (2015) *A identidade cultural na pós modernidade*. 12. ed. Rio de Janeiro: Lamparina. 64 p.
- IPHAN. Patrimônio Cultural. Disponível em: <http://portal.iphan.gov.br/pagina/detalhes/218>. Acesso em 30 abr. 2019.
- JAEGER, J. M. (2017) A cidade no museu: Representações da cidade de Canoas no museu Hugo Simões Lagranha. 2017. 88 f. [Trabalho de graduação, Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul]
- O TIMONEIRO. Canoas, 31 jan. 1968.
- O TIMONEIRO. Canoas, 21 fev. 1968.
- PELEGRINI, S. C. A.; FUNARI, P. P. (2013) *O que é patrimônio imaterial cultural*. São Paulo: Brasiliense.
- PENNA, R.; CORBELLINI, D.; GAYESKI, M. (2004) *Canoas – Para lembrar quem somos: Centro*. Canoas: Gráfica La Salle.
- PEREIRA, B. B.; BECKER, D. (2019) Os elementos formadores de identidade urbana: um estudo sobre o caso da cidade de Canoas -RS. In: XVIII ENANPUR - Encontro Nacional da Associação Nacional de Pós-graduação e Pesquisa em Planejamento Urbano Regional, Natal. Disponível em: <http://anpur.org.br/xviiienganpur/anaisadmin/capapdf.php?reqid=609> . Acesso em: 15/05/2020.
- RIO GRANDE DO SUL. [Constituição (1989)]. *Constituição do Estado do Rio Grande do Sul*. 4. ed. atual. Porto Alegre: Assembleia Legislativa do Estado do Rio Grande do Sul.
- SANDER, R. (2018) *1968: quando a terra tremeu*. São Paulo: Vestígio.
- SARLO, B. (2014) *A cidade vista: mercadorias e cultura urbana*. São Paulo: WMF Martins Fontes.
- SARLO, B. (1997) *Cenas da vida pós-moderna: intelectuais, arte e vídeo-cultura na Argentina*. Rio de Janeiro: Ed. UFRJ.
- SCHUTZ, J. A. V. (2019) *Pedagogias Culturais, Representações, e Identidades: a Praça do Avião, Patrimônio Cultural Imaterial de Canoas, RS*. 2019. [Dissertação de mestrado, Universidade Luterana do Brasil]
- SENNETT, R. (2008) *Carne e pedra*. Rio de Janeiro: Bestbolso.
- SILVA, J. (20 abril 2019) Canoas, minha terra, da Praça do Avião: O nome da cidade é pela embarcação, mas o símbolo vem pelo ar. *Diário de Canoas*: Diário de Canoas p. 1. Disponível em: <https://diariodecanoas.com.br/2019/04/noticias/regiao/2404531-canoas-minha-terra-da-praca-do-aviao.html>. Acesso em: 09 mar. 2020.
- SILVA, J. P. da. (1989) *As origens de Canoas- Conquista- Povoamento- Evolução*. 4. ed. Porto Alegre: Globo.
- VIEGAS, D. H. (2011) *Entre o(s) passado(s) e o futuro(s) da cidade: um estudo sobre a urbanização de Canoas/RS (1929-1959)* [Dissertação de Mestrado Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul]