



17th International Summer School 2011

European Ph.D. on
Social Representations and Communication
At the Multimedia LAB & Research Center, Rome-Italy

"Social Representations of Urban Places
and Environment: Images, Memory and Identity"

8th - 20th July 2011

<http://www.europhd.eu/html/onda02/07/18.00.00.00.shtml>

Key Lecture

European Ph.D

on Social Representations and Communication

www.europhd.eu



URBAN MEMORY IN ELDERLY PEOPLE

Martha de Alba, UAMI

México

Overview

- Social memory
 - Memory as a cognitive process
 - Return to the classics: Halbwachs and Bartlett
- Urban memory and socio-spatial representations
 - Social memory of the city
- Elderly and the city
- Mexico City urban memory in elderly residents
 - Methodology
 - Sample
 - Analysis
 - Results

Memory as a cognitive process

- Distinction between neuronal system and mental representation
- Is not a copy but a reconstruction
- Is flexible dynamic and multiple
- Is selective during codification and recovering processes
- Is an intelligent process we reconstruct past in a way that it make sense for us in present moment
- Emotional concordance
- Social basis of memory: neurological ecology and social interaction
- Automatic acts and spontaneous images

- How does memory work as a cognitive, social and cultural process?

– Return to the classics:

- Bartlett (1932)
- Halbwachs (1925, 1941, 1950)

Does groups and societies remember?

Levels of analysis of psycho-social phenomena

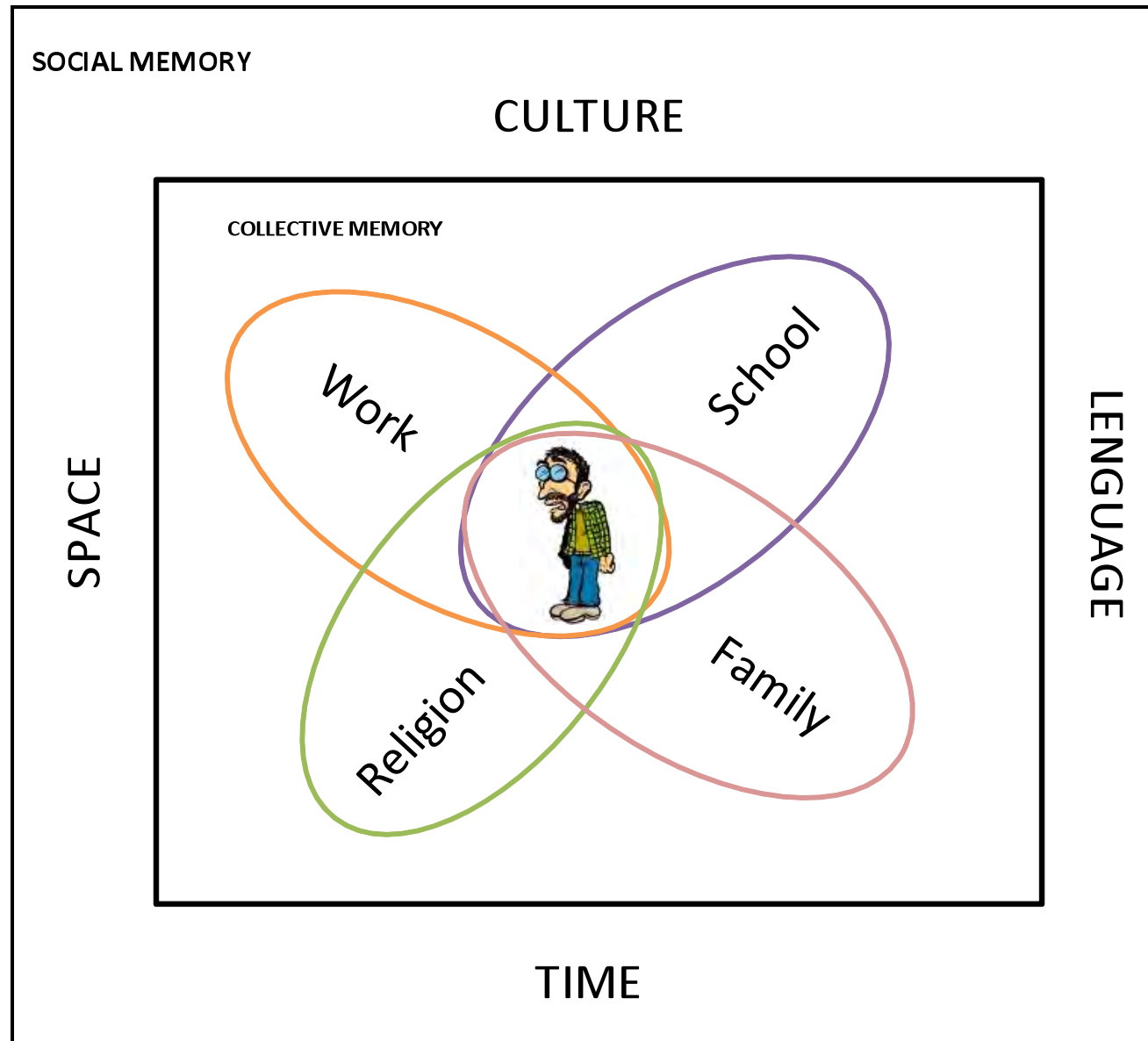
- Individuals
- Interaction
- Groups
- Societies

Maurice Halbwachs

“Psycho-sociologue retrouvé”

- Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire, 1925/1994
- La topographie légendaire des lieux saints, 1941/2008
- La mémoire collective, 1950/1997

Social frames of memory



Urban memory

- Space as a social frame of memory
- Socio-spatial representations
- Urban experience and biography

Space as a social frame of memory

— Halbwachs

- Spaces as projection of individual and groups: system of signs
- Life spaces are part of identity (place identity)
- Space assures continuity to individuals and groups as marks of their past activity

— Lieux de mémoire

- Spaces as symbols: power, nation
- Rituals reinforce memory of places

— Remembering in the modern city

- Discourses that have built the city: Religious, Social, Technical and Semiotic (parques temáticos)
- Modernity and post-modernity: amnesia
- Recovering memory of comedy streets

Socio-spatial representations

- Memory: social representation of the past elaborated in the present moment according to the person social situation
- Subject and object of memory: Who remembers what?
- Anchoring: social frames of memory
- Objectivation: recall process is schematic

Urban experience (practices) and biography (life trajectories)

- Phenomenology of everyday life (Shutz)
 - Space and time as coordinates of experience in everyday life
 - Biography: accumulation of social and cultural knowledge (social and collective memory)
 - Action: significant activities and planned projects

Elderly people and the city

- Societies are getting old
 - How do elder deal with big cities and megalopolis?
 - Are cities prepared for this demographical transition?

Some topics of research about elder and the city

- Daily mobility
- Residential mobility
- Retirement
- Strategies developed by elder to cope with the city
- Life stories

How can we study urban memory?

An empirical exemple:

**Urban memory of Mexico City
elderly residents**

- By studying the past experiences of the cities, we could understand urban present context and the current elderly needs:

- ❖ Recovering the place identity and the local traditions in public places
- ❖ Identify elderly cultural interests and desires
- ❖ Help them coping in a high-tech world

Mexico city as object of SR and memory

- Between the oldest (1918) and the youngest (1950)... elderly experienced:
 - A strong process of **expansion**:
 - **1** million in 1921
 - **5** million in 1960
 - **20** million in 2010
 - and **modernization**:
 - Urbanization: technology, functionalism
 - Cultural changes: comfort in everyday life (personal car, electric devices), supermarkets and malls, etc.

The city expansion



Urban landscape transformation



New residential developments



ESCALATORIO DE AEROMAR S. A.

POR FIN...!

lo esperado...

CASAS a su gusto

como **RENTA**

con el proyecto que usted elija

solo en

Ciudad Satélite



para usted "AUSTRO-PLAN" escogió los mejores lotes

usted

- Elige su TERRENO...
- Elige la UBICACIÓN...
- Elige el número de RECÁMARAS...
- Elige la DISTRIBUCIÓN que más le agrade...

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10% de enganche

MENSUALIDADES DE \$2,000.00

CASAS de TRES y CUATRO RECÁMARAS
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OPORTUNIDAD LIMITADA para ESTE MES

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Austroplan de México, S. A.





Functional and
modern house





EL DESARROLLO INDUSTRIAL

Durante el periodo presidencial del licenciado Miguel Alemán Valdés (1946-1952) tuvo lugar un marcado proceso de industrialización; la Carretera Panamericana se hizo realidad para competir con el ferrocarril en la ruta del comercio hacia los Estados Unidos y se inició la construcción de la Ciudad Universitaria, al tiempo que nuevas avenidas se abrieron a la vialidad, como División del Norte, Tasqueña, Universidad y Mixcoac, en el sur, y Cuatitlán en el norte, entre muchas otras. El

LOS NUEVOS TRANVÍAS QUE
HEREDAMOS DE LA CIUDAD DE
CHICAGO DESPLAZARON A LAS VIEJAS
UNIDADES. CA. 1960. SINALOA-INAH

Highway and subway construction



AÑOS DESPUÉS DE LA INAUGURACIÓN
DEL VIADUCTO SE SUMÓ COMO VÍA
RÁPIDA EL PERIFÉRICO. SINAFO-INAH



Research questions

- How elderly residents construct social representations and memory of Mexico City with a long experience of life in it?
- What are the contents of SR and urban memory? according to:
 - Gender
 - Social position
 - Geographical location
 - Personal Biography

Methodology: a qualitative approach

- Semi – structured interviews about collective memory and social representations:

❖ From the past...

- Social frames of memory (Halbwachs):
 - Time: personal (life stages) and historical (city past)
 - Space: city, neighborhoods, particular places
 - Groups: family and community context, education and job trajectory
- Sketch map of the spatial memory
- Family genealogies and biography

❖ To the present...

- Their social representations of the city
- Their daily life in the city

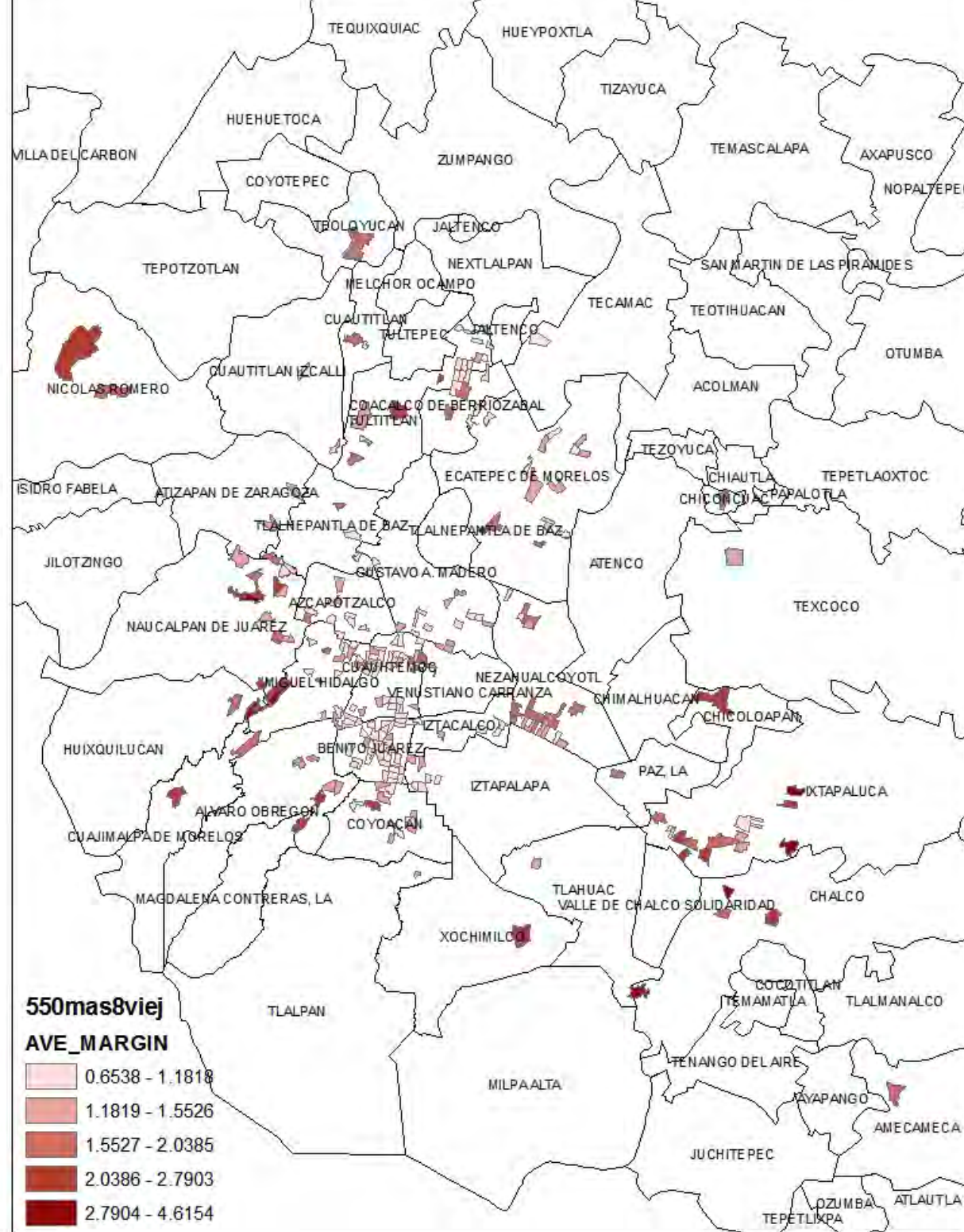
Sample

21

Social differences

<i>Districts by decades</i>	Middle class and high level 5 men 5 women	Popular neighborhoods 5 men 5 women	Total de entrevistas
Ciudad Central: 1940	Narvarte	Morelos-Tepito	20
Coyoacán: 1950	Romero de Terreros	Pueblo de Los Reyes	20
Naucalpan: 1960	Ciudad Satélite	Bosques de Moctezuma	20
Neza: 1970	Bosques de Aragón	Evolución	20
Ixtapaluca: 1980	Unidad Habitacional Los Héroes.	La Cañada	20
Total	50	50	100

Areas with high
density of
elderly people
by
marginalization
level





SATÉLITE

TOTOL

ARAGÓN

TEPITO

EVOLUCIÓN

NARVARTE

TERREROS

REYES

HÉROES

CAÑADA

Distrito Federal

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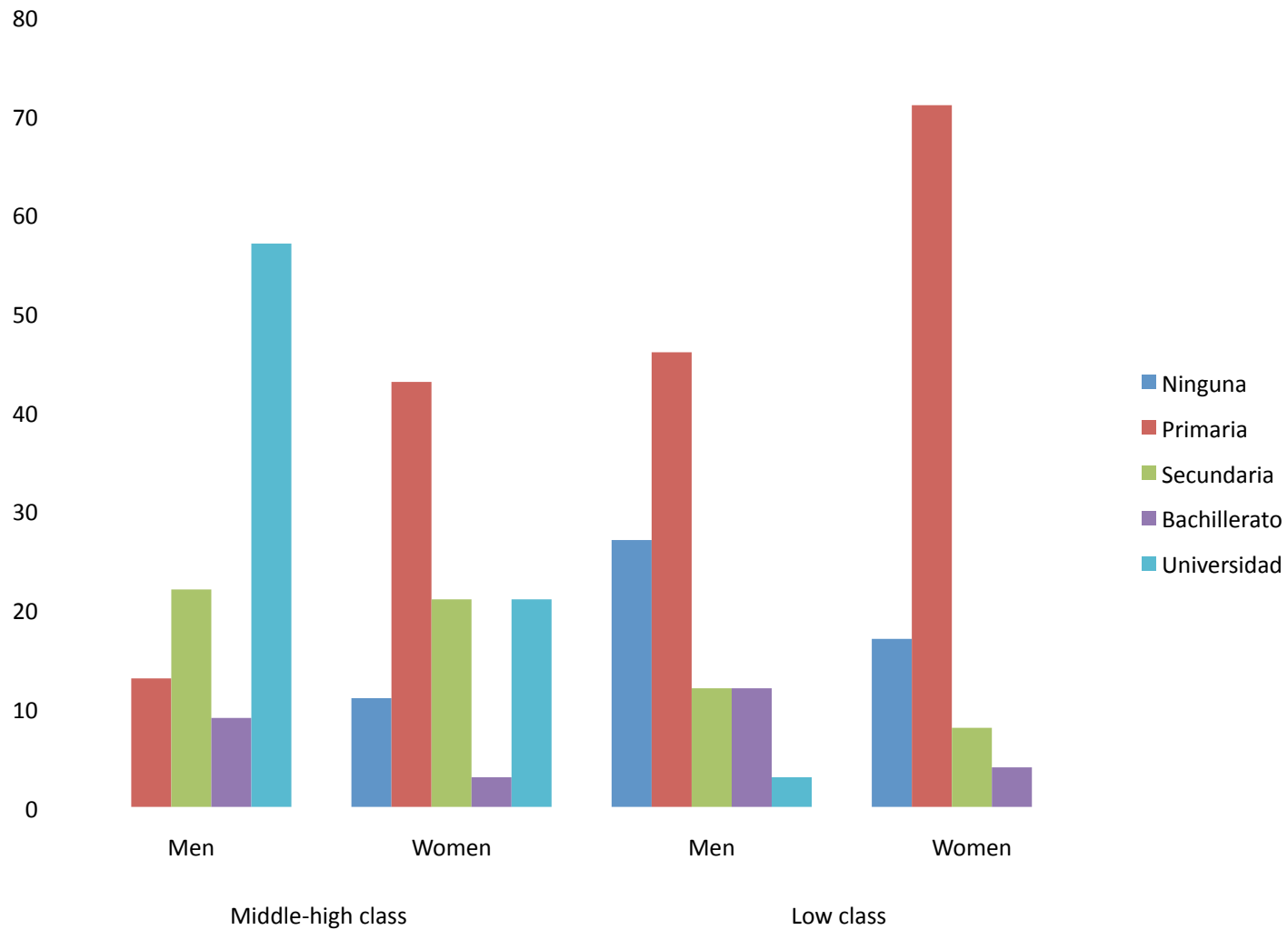
19°18'53.16" N 99°01'21.25" O elevación 2325 m

Alt. ojo 75.81 km

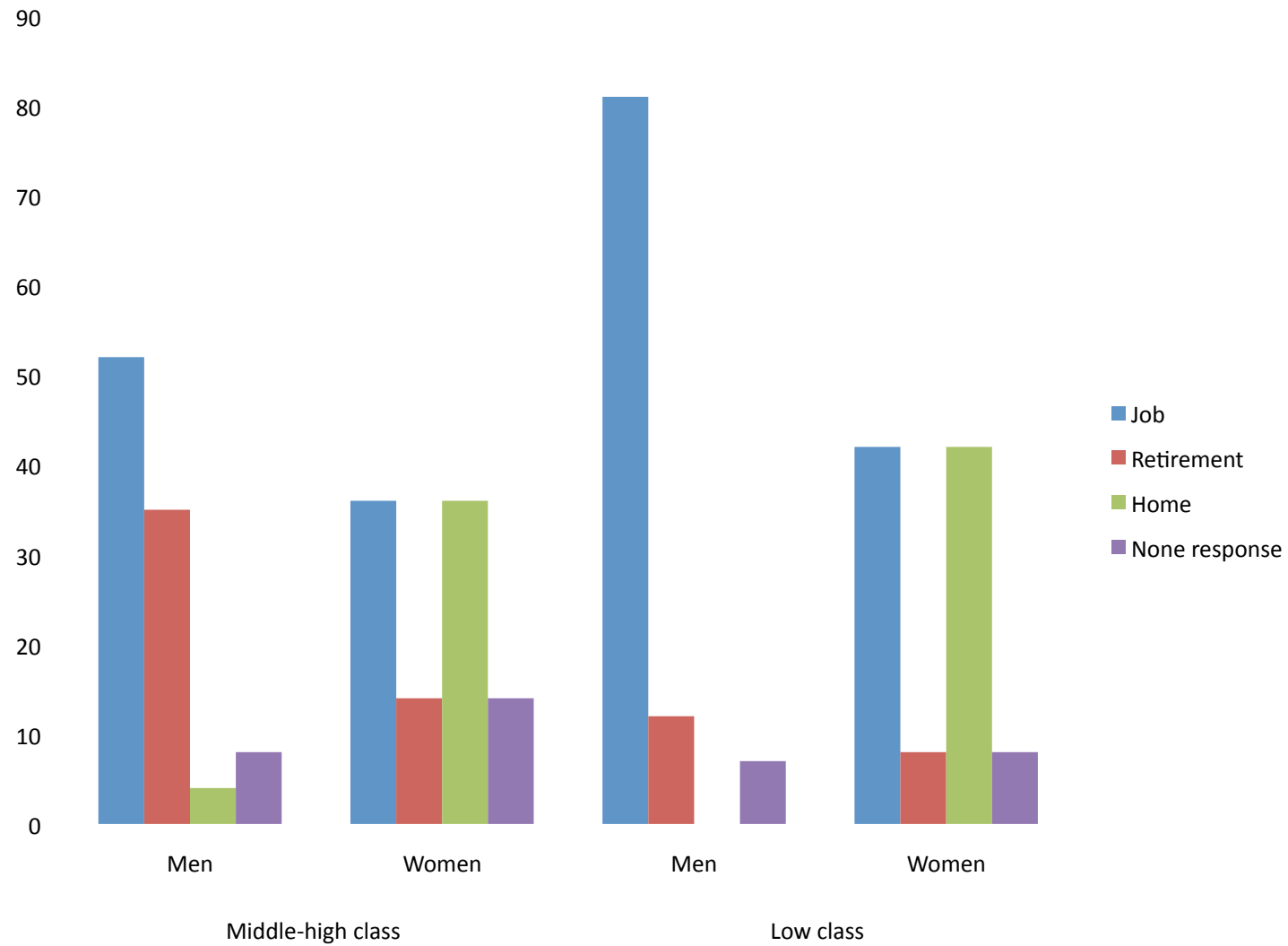
Who the interviewed are:

- 101 Interviews : 52 women and 49 men
- Average age: 72, between 60 and 92
- 39/101 were born in Mexico City,
- 62/101 moved to the city. Most when they were children or young

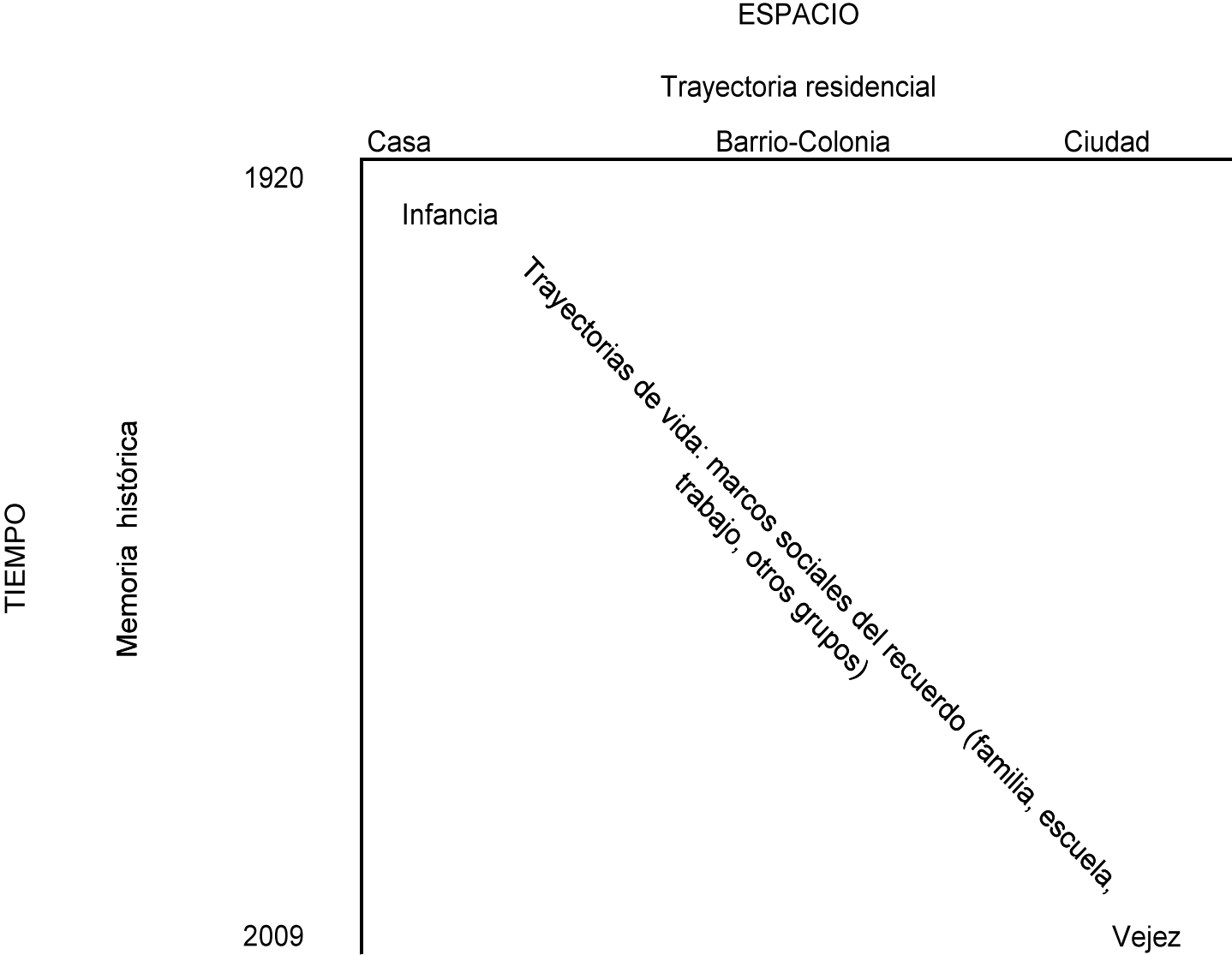
Education by neighborhood and sex (%)



Occupation by neighborhood and sex (%)



Interviews analysis



Complementary text analysis

Atlas-ti

- Semantic analysis based on researcher's interpretation of text contents: codification process
- Deep knowledge of our material:
 - ❖ What are the topics that set up the urban memory of the "old" residents?
 - ❖ How these topics correlates themselves?
 - ❖ Differences by: gender, neighborhood, geographic area.

Alceste

- Lexical analysis based on statistical co-occurrence frequency of words
- Exploratory analysis:
 - What type of vocabulary each group has?
 - Which memory of the city matches with every vocabulary group?
 - Are differences by gender, socioeconomic status or geographic area, linked to the groups detected by the software?

Atlas-ti codes

- Collective memory of urban space
 - ❖ Mexico City past experiences and descriptions
 - ❖ Neighborhood narratives
 - ❖ Residential trajectories
- Trajectories
 - ❖ Job
 - ❖ Education
 - ❖ Family
- Life stages
 - ❖ Child
 - ❖ Young
 - ❖ Adult
 - ❖ Signor
- Mexico City today
 - ❖ Social representations of the city
 - ❖ Daily life
 - ❖ Health
 - ❖ Family network

Preliminary results

- 40 interviews:
 - ❖ center / periphery neighborhoods:
 - ❖ Narvarte
 - ❖ Tepito
 - ❖ Evolución
 - ❖ Ciudad Satélite
 - ❖ men and women
 - ❖ over 60 years old

Hierarchical descendent analysis

Descriptive memory: Testimony

Socio-affective: Nostalgia

Modernization process and Public Transportation

Sociocultural life of the City

Urban Modernization CI 5 (11.96%)	Metropolitan transportation CI 2 (26.31%)	The money: job and consumption CI 4 (14.60%)	Family walk CI 3 (14.66%)	Best time of the city CI 1 (32.47%)
111.28 San	183.68 Camión	99.28 Dar	70.54 Llev+	81.23 Época+
96.51 Siembra	117.93 Camione+	79.83 Comprar	49.59 Salir	74.06 Ciudad+
73.72 Terreno+	110.03 Tranvía+	51.94 Hija+	49.39 Mamá	45.27 Vida
69.60 Llano+	104.19 Pasab+	51.37 Pesos	47.59 Cada	43.00 Bonita
69.28 Zona+	61.15 Tren+	48.61 Señor+	43.65 Parque+	38.23 Vivir
66.65 Rosa	57.89 Estación+	45.88 Televisión	39.85 Jugar	36.68 Ciudad de México
60.51 Juan	49.87 Linea+	44.06 Mamá	39.00 Día+	30.57 Problema+
59.20 Polanco	48.14 Tomabamos	43.40 Andab+	37.31 Paseo+	28.50 Recuerdo+
54.19 Puras+	48.03 Bajab+	41.13 Cara+	37.14 Herman+	20.93 Interes+
51.77 Hacienda+	47.80 Villa	40.06 Alcanz+	35.98 Chapultepec	20.28 Agrad+
51.77 Baldio+	43.60 Tomaba+	29.34 Patron+	34.67 Hijo+	20.19 Gente
44.35 Milpa+	40.24 Camin+	29.34 Pobreza	34.33 Jalab+	18.29 Cambi+
39.45 Casa+	37.46 Metro+	24.77 Barat+	30.39 Domingo	Carct. Entrevistado
36.93 Maíz	33.87 Peralvillo	Carct. Entrevistado	28.30 Comida	39.27 Satélite
33.03 Edificio+	33.22 Lleg+	76.37 Tepito	20.76 Familia	26.71 Preparatoria
32.26 Avenida+	28.19 Trolebus	81.71 Comerciantes	20.21 Campo	20.74 Licenciatura
29.15 Perifer+	Carct. Entrevistado	45.46 Primaria	13.51 bonito+	
29.15 Pueblito+	8.08 Evolución	22.26 Sin Escolaridad	Carct. Entrevistado	
Carct. Entrevistado	45.24 Sin Escolaridad	14.28 Sexo: femenino	10.30 Evolución	
24.14 Narvarte			3.99 Satélite	
129.88 Secundaria			37.84 Ama de casa	
46.22 Pensionado			4.88 Sexo: femenino	
28.68 Sexo: masculino				

Which memory of the Mexico City emerged from these analysis?

- Nostalgia (socio-affective memory) / Testimony (descriptive memory)
- Socio-cultural City / Modernization process
- Women (money and family)/Men (modernization)
- Differences by residential zone
- Differences by socioeconomic status + educational attainment

Collective urban memory during
childhood and youth
(1940-1950)

Segments of text analyzed by Alceste (92 interviews)

- Atlas-ti codes about:
 - Collective memory of urban space and biography
 - ❖ Mexico City past experiences and descriptions
 - ❖ Neighborhood narratives
 - ❖ Residential, Education, Job and family trajectories
 - Life stages
 - ❖ Child
 - ❖ Young

Childhood and youth memory of the city is a socio-affective memory:

- Nostalgia: the past (life and city) was always better than the present
- Fantastic stories: family and urban myths
 - Phantoms
 - Miracles
 - Relationships with historic and famous personalities
 - Urban fears: serial killers, children kidnappers
 - Turning points in personal biography (marriage, birth, death)

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The best time of the city: My youth



Traditional Danzón vs Modern Rock and Roll

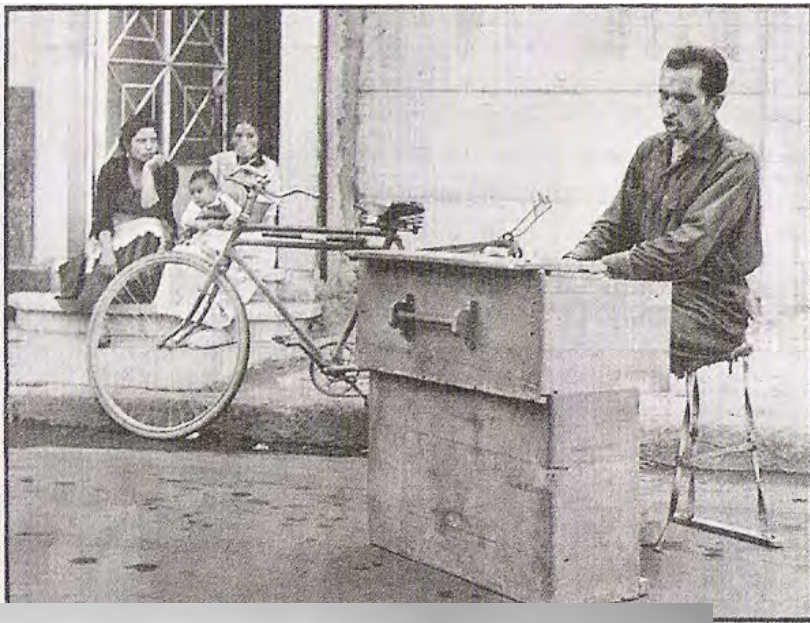
- ay es que si supieras. pues mira, en mi juventud me gustó, me gustaban los bailes, porque los bailes aquí en México eran bonitos y, eran respetados. Había el salón de baile La Playa. En aquella época eran varios artistas: estaba la Sonia López, Olimpo Cárdenas, el Celio González... Sin zapatos, bailábamos ahí en La Playa, adentro del salón sin zapatos... en aquel tiempo era puro danzón... íbamos a las 7 nomás estábamos 1 hora u hora y media... vámonos porque ya es retarde, ya cuando llegábamos ya nos estaban esperando [los padres] en el zaguán o aquí en la esquina, ya nomás nos ponían los latigazos... (Gloria, Tepito, 67 años).
- Íbamos a salones de baile, se llamaban téz danzantes, de 5 a 10 de la noche... Los salones fueron el Maxims, El Riviera, el Ciro's de las Lomas que era lo mas popofiano, El Pavellón en el centro, donde iban todas las empleadas de Liverpool. Un club social y deportivo, le decían Chamberis... Se distinguían de los cabarets, donde vendían alcohol. Muy sano el ambiente. Que capaz que tu papá te viera con un cigarro, te volaban los dientes eh? Yo conocí a Alberto Vázquez, a Cesar Costa, a todos porque todo mundo formaba grupos de rock.... Nos estábamos acordando el sábado pasado que tuvimos un desayuno, de los que jugamos fútbol americano. Oye te alcanzaba el tiempo para todo, o sea que si vivimos intensamente". (Germán, Satélite, 66 años)

People used to dress up
more elegantly



Groups and space as frames of urban memory (Alceste)

	Low class neighborhoods		High-Middle class neighborhoods	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Family		Values and principles, mother role	Support for education	Emotional memory: affects and conflicts
Education	Elementary school		Basic-University studies	
Job	Informal jobs: urban and rural	Informal jobs: maids, attendants	Office work	
City	Transportation, streets and avenues, touristic places, urban-rural landscape, parks, cinema, dancing clubs, safe, clean, civic education			



Precarious jobs
and trades



Profiles

- The city is remembered in accordance to socio-spatial and cultural frames of memory:
 - Downtown popular neighborhoods
 - Pre-Hispanic villages that became part of the city
 - Informal urbanization on the periphery: migrants from the country
 - Central districts neighborhoods for high and middle class population

Downtown neighbourhoods

“Vecindades”



Downtown popular neighborhoods

- Vecindades: multi-function rooms without domestic services, collective toilets and laundry.
- Collective life based on social organization and solidarity; collective parties and religious holidays.
- Economy: workers (shoemakers, potters, blacksmiths) and street commerce
- Social stigma: poor people, robbers, pickpockets, prostitution, cheaters
- Hobbies: children games in collective yards or neighborhood streets; dancing clubs, cinema
- The city: neighborhood surroundings, touristic places, transportation



Pre-Hispanic villages that became part of the city

- Traditional village near the city: rural family houses around a central square
- Church : regulator of social life
- Lack of urban services: electricity, paving
- Economy: agriculture and commerce of flowers, vegetables, farm animals
- Hobbies: religious holidays, games in a rural context, cinema



From the country to the city



Neza City



Informal urbanization on the periphery: migrants from the country

- Moved alone or with the family looking for better economical conditions
- Self-made precarious houses on the periphery, without any urban service
- Job: most men worked as masons and women as maids during childhood and youth
- Long distance urban transfers

High and middle class neighborhoods



Central districts neighborhoods for high and middle class population

- Neighborhoods constructed by city planners during late XIX or early XX century, with all facilities and services.
- Family: white collar professionals.
- Experience of modern life: private cars, electric devices.
- Private schools and public universities
- Daily mobility in central districts
- Hobbies: games in neighborhood streets and parks, sports in private clubs, coffee shops with music and dancing clubs



MAXIMA EXPRESION DE BELLEZA EN JARDINES DEL PEDREGAL DE SAN ANGEL



Una suntuosa tradición
digna de su magnifico escenario,
consegua a este lugar, unico en el mundo,
como el marco clásico
para las más descolantes
exhibiciones de arte y de belleza.

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