



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

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When the city talks to us

17th International Summer School, 11 July, 2011
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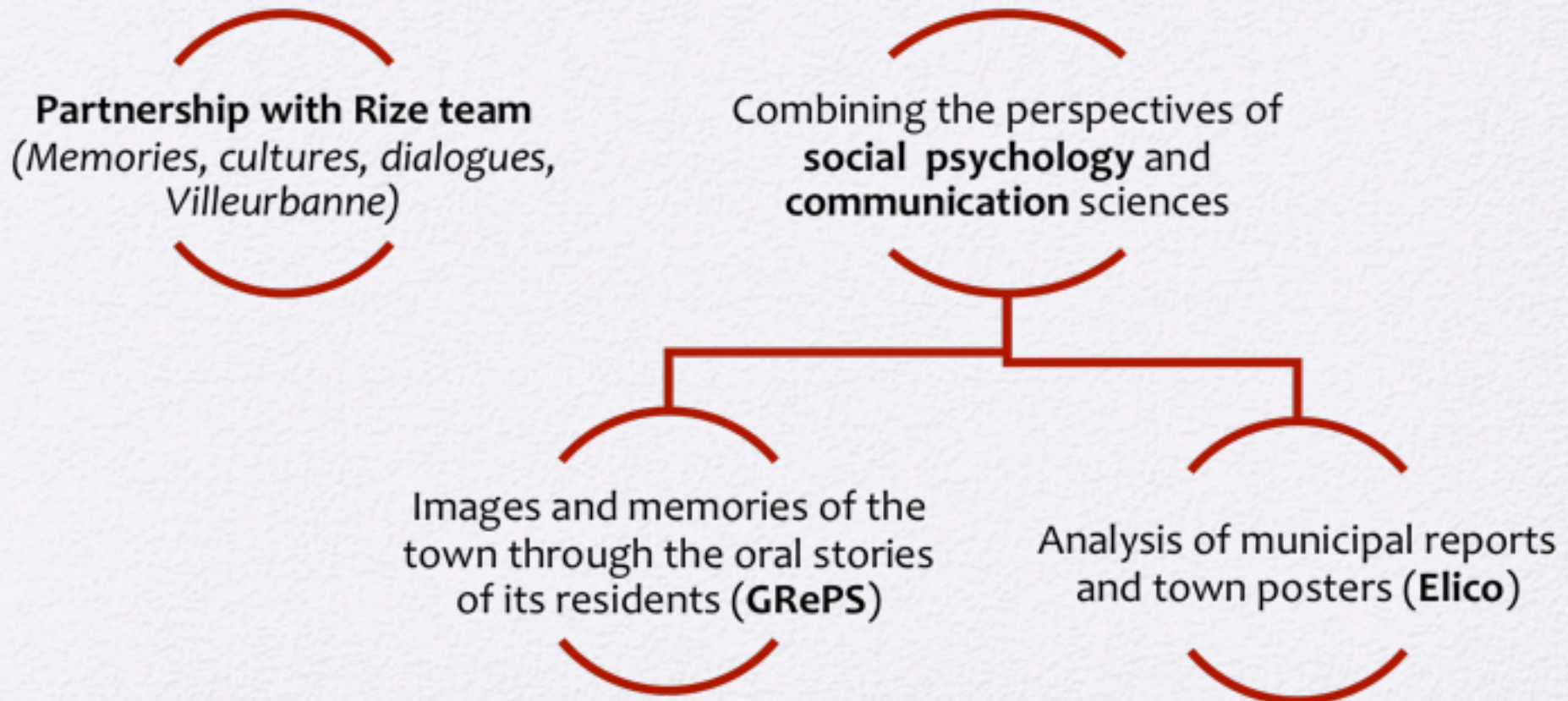
Research Context

- Co-financing: Rhone-Alpes & the DRAC, (Regional Directorate of Cultural Affairs) Lyon 2 (internal invitation to tender)
- Inter-laboratory collaboration
 - Members of GRePS (A. Béal, L. Charrier, A. Demoures, L. Joao, V. Haas, V. Hendrickx, V. Hodara, N. Kalampalikis, E. Levasseur, J. Morin)
 - and of the Elico laboratory (Information and Communication Sciences Research Team) J. Auboussier, I. Garcin-Marrou, I. Hare, L. Jacquez, J.M. Rampon

Objectives of the study

- Investigate **memories of the 21th century** as part of a call for projects dedicated to the town of Villeurbanne.
- Understand the role of **working class memory** and **memories of migrations** within urban stories.
- Compare the **collective** memory (of groups) with the **institutional** memory (of the town).
- Conduct this work as a **cultural project** with residents.

Research context in



Research Context

- Lack of historical works on the town of Villeurbanne
- How does *collective* or plural memory fit with, differ from or become entangled with the dominant and officially acknowledged *institutional* memory?
- Presentation of a study "in the making," finalisation, writing up of the results.

Lines of research inquiry

- *What is the history of the town as told by its inhabitants?*
- *What collective memories do they share? How are these memories formed?*
- *Can links be drawn between autobiographical memory and the collective memory of groups present in the same region?*
- *What memory traces of the town's history still remain within the urban area?*
- *What do people consider to be positive or negative about the history of Villeurbanne?*

Villeurbanne (140,000 inhabitants) on the outskirts of Lyon (473, 000 inhabitants) ...



Problematisation

- A permanent reference, a source of stability and a community symbol, the town provides its residents with a common world, with which they identify. Beneath its physical appearance, the town becomes the *object of social representations*, built up over time by *common practices*. Studying the images that the respondents may have of their town, we touch on *memory of place and the memory of the groups* present in the same area.

Theoretical Elements (1)

- Memory is dynamic and part of the social and symbolic space (Halbwachs, 1925, 1932, 1950)
- The spatial setting is involved in the collective act of remembering (as **reference** and as **trace**).
- Account must be taken of the **temporality** of the urban setting, as the town represents history in both senses of the word (material and in terms of content and practice)

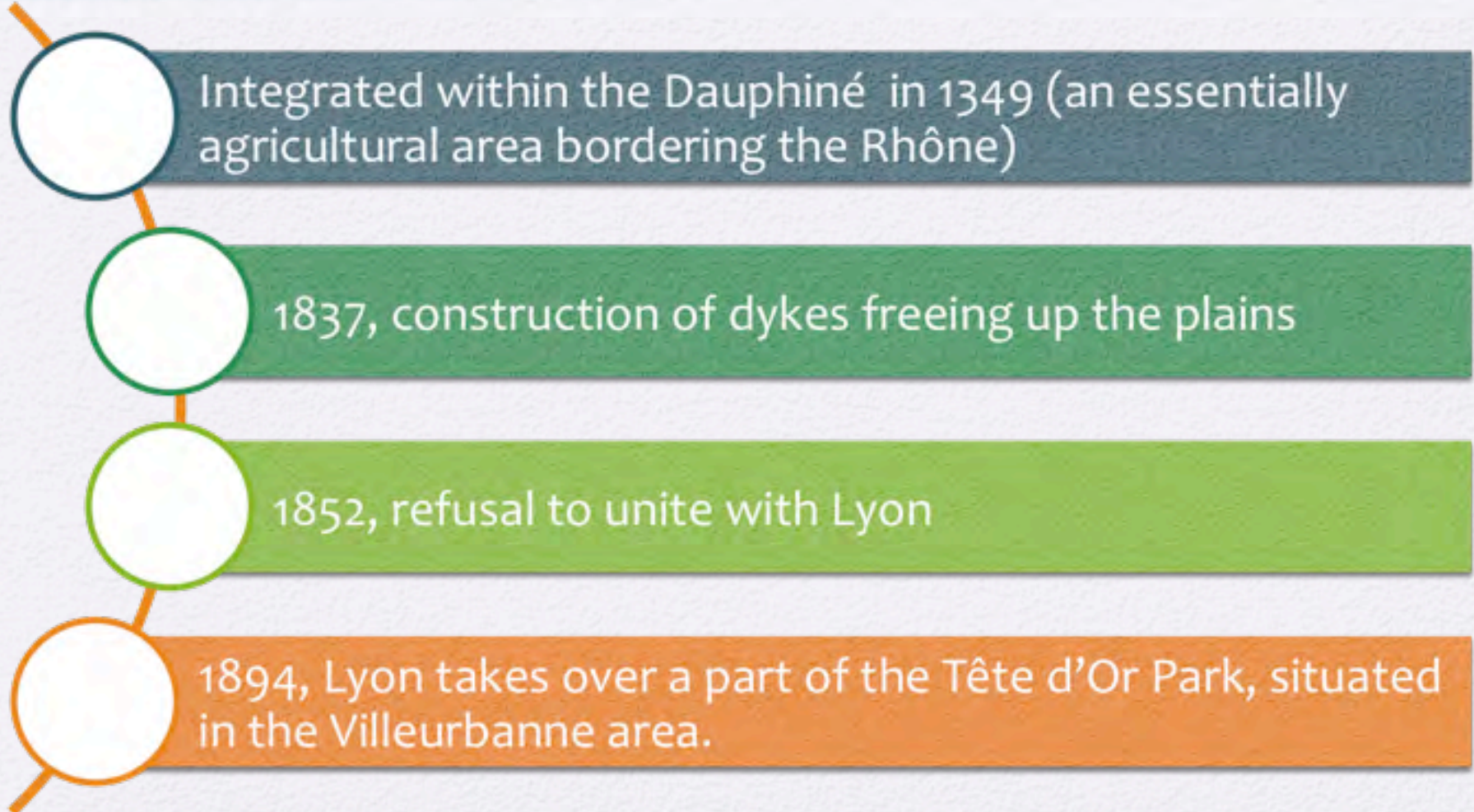
Theoretical Elements (2)

- Consideration of socio-spatial and emotional dimensions related to the urban subject
- Use of **mind maps** or cognitive maps (De Alba, 2002; Jodelet & Milgram 1976; Jodelet, 1982, 1996; Haas, 1999, 2002, 2004)
- The **urban experience** of the inhabitants is marked by their membership of social groups and the values, signs of their individual and collective identities and collective memories they project onto this space.
- Research into the shameful or painful aspects of history (Haas, 2002, 2004, 2007).


Theoretical Elements (3)

- Different **types** of memory exist: social, collective, institutional, autobiographical ...
- These memories are **reconstructions** in the present (Bartlett, 1932) based on the **issues** of the day, the place of individuals within groups, and the social & cultural context.
- These memories are interdependent, selective and normative.
- What forms of **transmission** are at play between these memories? Overlaps, contradictions?

A glimpse of



(History ...)



Between 1880 and 1930, a period of heavy industrialisation. Growth of the population (6,000 inhabitants in 1851, 82,000 in 1931 of whom 69 % were workers).

1934, construction of tower blocks byr Morice Leroux (an identity-based political and urban project). A genuine 'municipal socialist' project » (Rebérioux, M., 2004)

1977, election of Charles Hernu as Mayor of Villeurbanne.

2001, election of Jean-Paul Bret, current Mayor of Villeurbanne.

The Villeurbanne coat of arms



A silver town set on a river.
The Dauphin evokes the **membership** of the Dauphiné until 1852, while the Lion represents the **influence** of the town of Lyon on Villeurbanne...

Chaque jeudi, un autre regard sur la ville

TRIBUNE DE LYON

1'50

TESTING Discrimination ethnique
au logement p. 108

TRAVAIL En prison aussi, c'est la crise p. 14

SPECTACLES C'est parti pour
les Invites p. 34

Villeurbanne, l'anti bling-bling

P. 20

Charles Raux, directeur du Laboratoire d'économie des transports

"Il ne faut pas faire le TOP"

JEUX De bien étranges libellules p. 48

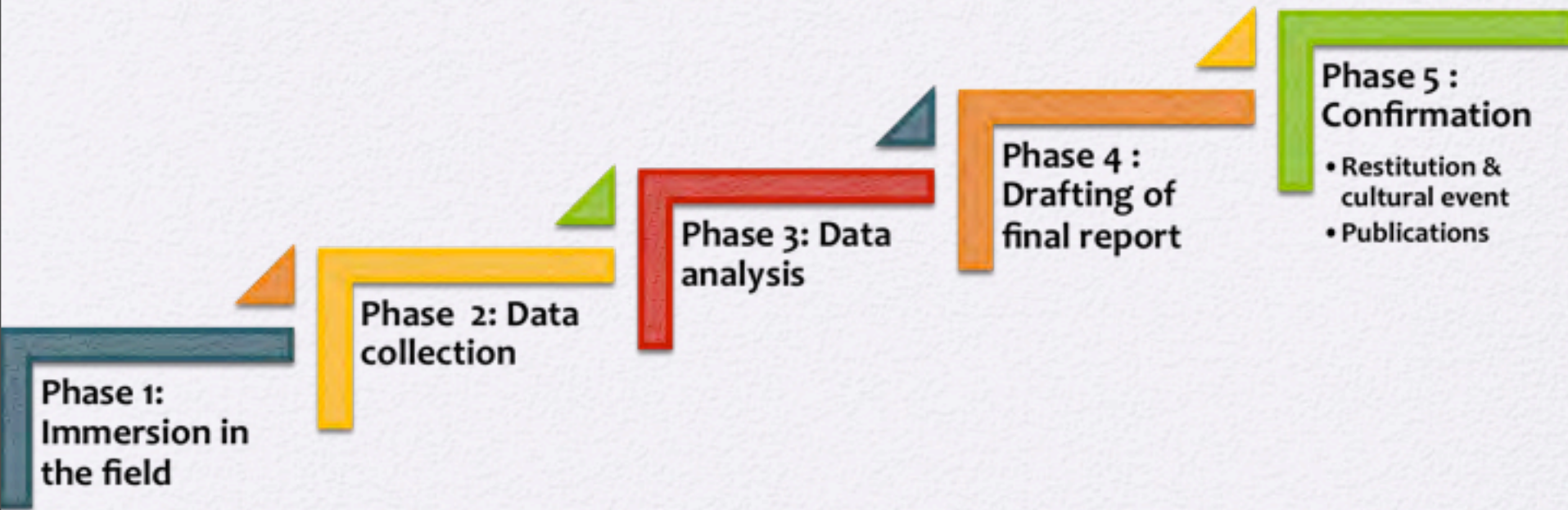
INTERNET Novius cartonne p. 100

Villeurbanne
is distinct
from Lyon ...

Problematism & methodological approach

- To study the role of historical and emotional dimensions in socio-spatial representations of the town of Villeurbanne through the memories of its inhabitants.
- Implementation of a research field (pendulum-type)
 - ✓ Visits for field-conceptualisation (Grounded theory)
 - ✓ Visits with the scientific partner team

Research phases



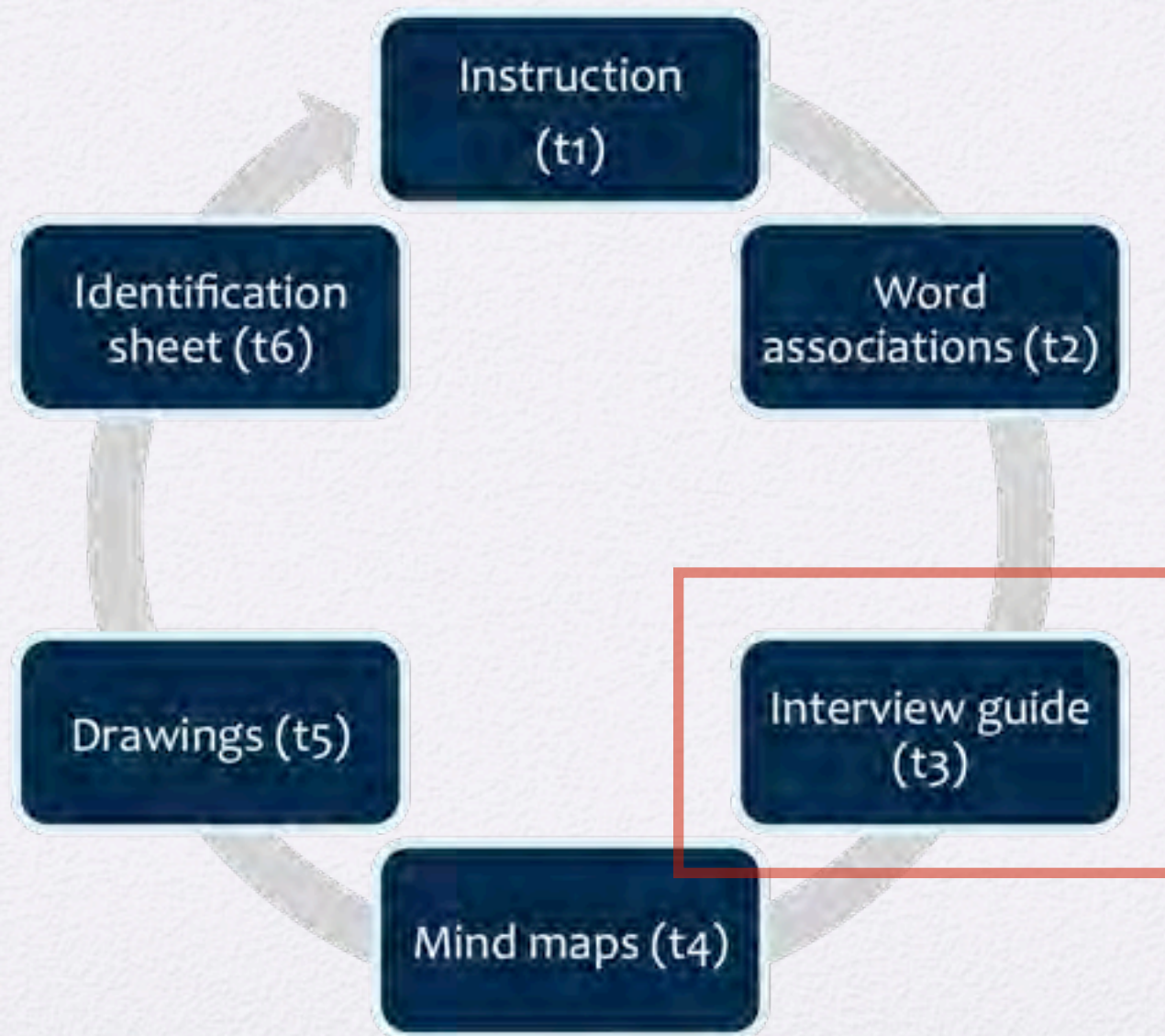
Research operations & data collected

CORPUS	SAMPLE
"Villeurbanne" word associations	n=640
Interviews with mediators (persons related to the town through their official role)	n=12
Interviews with residents	n=33
Residents' drawings	n=20
Mind maps (from interviews)	n=28
Mind maps (in progress)	n=200

A complex methodology given the field ...

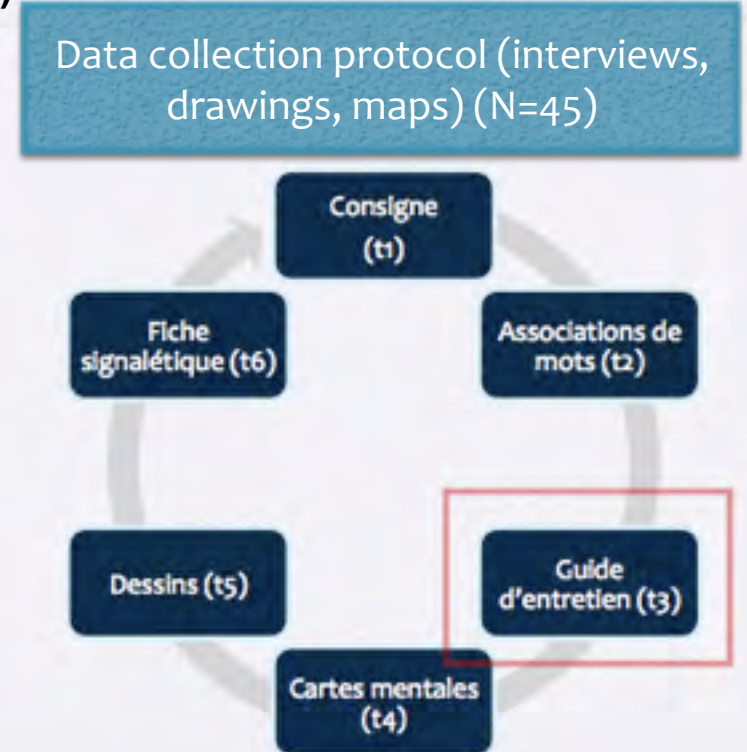
- Difficulties in recruiting inhabitants (who were asked to agree to a recorded interview lasting over an hour ...)
- The process is complex and lengthy
- Not content with mere "regulars": recruitment based on knowledge and "snowball" effect
- Interview context changed by the signing of a contract at the end of the dialogue (with a view to creating the Rize oral archives).

Protocol for data collection (speeches, drawings, maps) (N=45)



Protocol for data collection (speeches, drawings, maps) (N=45)

1. Current characteristics
2. Charm/displeasure
3. Attachment
4. Comparison
5. Changes
6. Daily life/activities
8. Traffic
9. Life cycles in the town



MIND MAPS (PHASE 1)

Use the map to indicate the places ...

- which you feel you know well
- which you feel you don't know
- which you like
- which you don't like
- where you usually go shopping (c)
- ...
- where you usually meet friends (a)
- where you usually eat (m)
- you would want to visit with a friend passing through
- which seem to you to represent Villeurbanne's history
- which you associate with "rich Villeurbanne"
- which you associate with "poor Villeurbanne"

Use of a tool: cognitive maps

(Phase 1) Collecting of socio-spatial data



Use of a tool: cognitive maps (Phase 2) limits



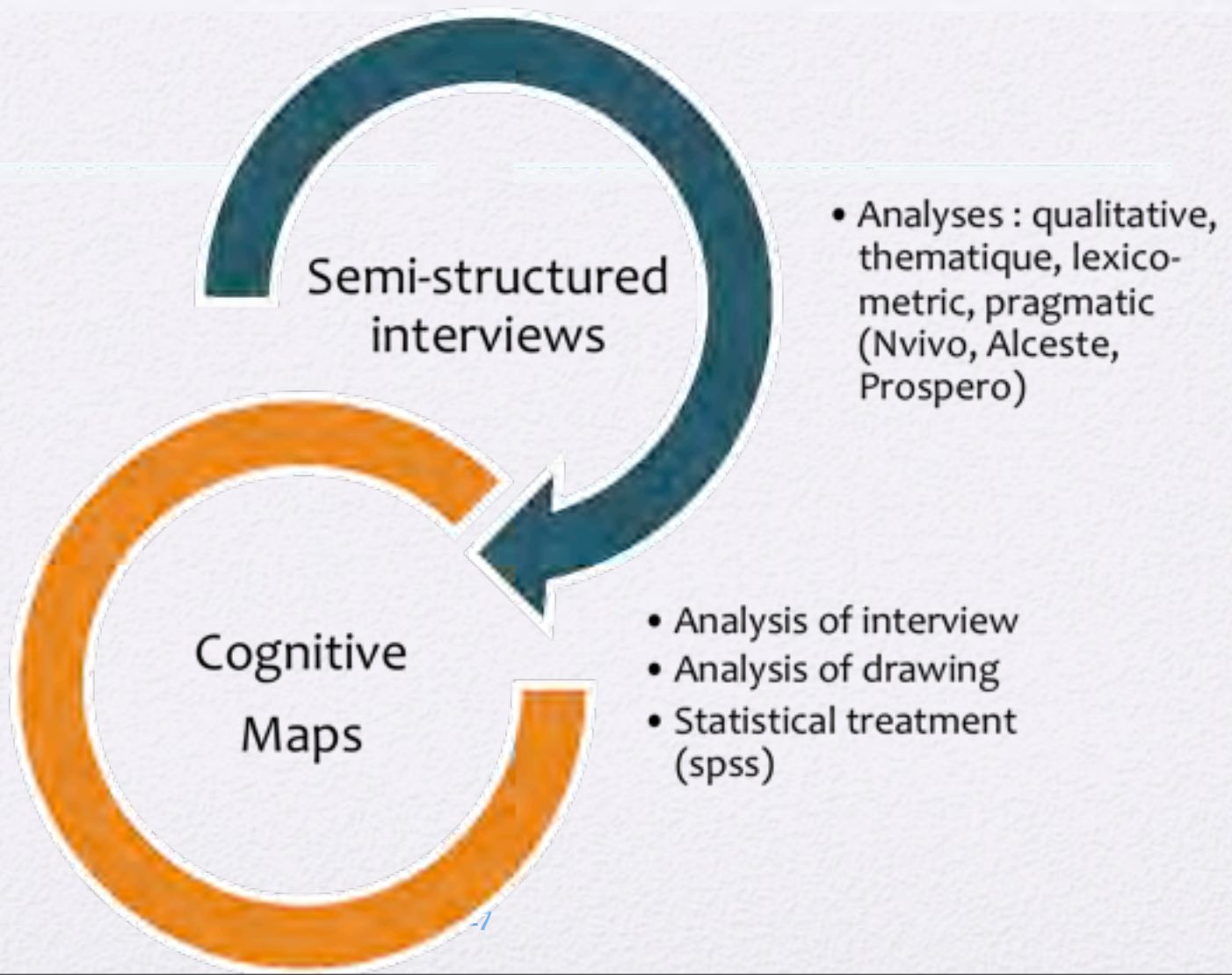
A drawing of VILLEURBANNE



Another drawing of Villeurbanne ...



Data analysis(GRePS Team)



Analysis of mind maps

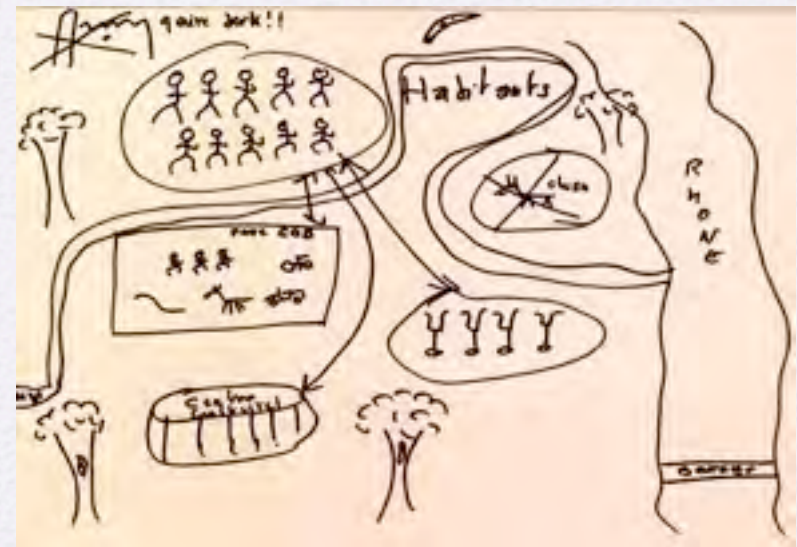
- Statistical treatment of the choices made on the maps.
- Data entry spreadsheet of 1170 dependent variables (boxes) and 14 independent variables (place of residence, years spent there, district...).
- An initial descriptive analysis of the sample.
- A second analysis around geographic dimensions (known, unknown places etc...)
- Deeper analysis of 200 maps is underway.

Drawings of Villeurbanne



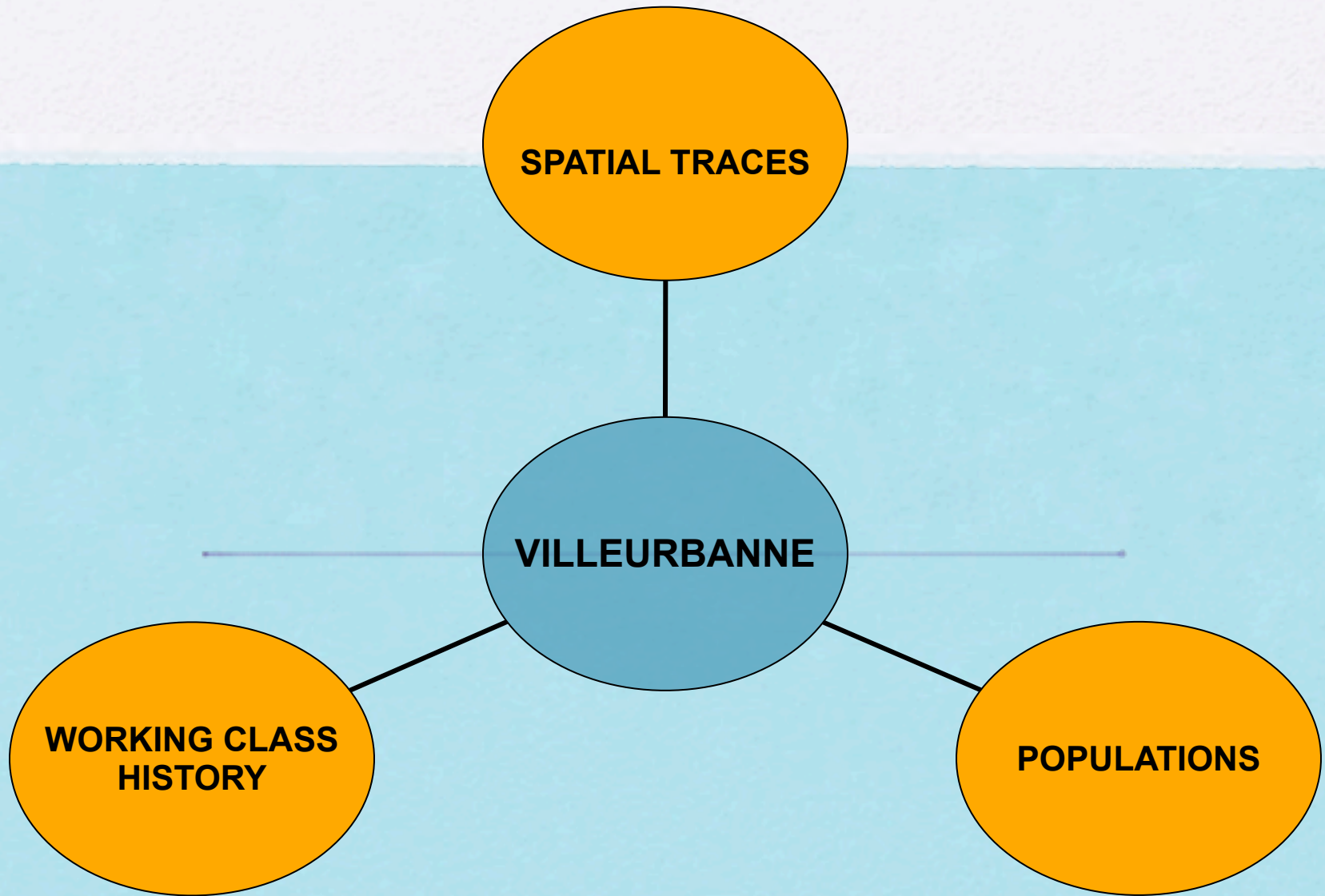
Production Interview E18

E.g. presence of limits ...
that exclude some areas of the town
(slums)

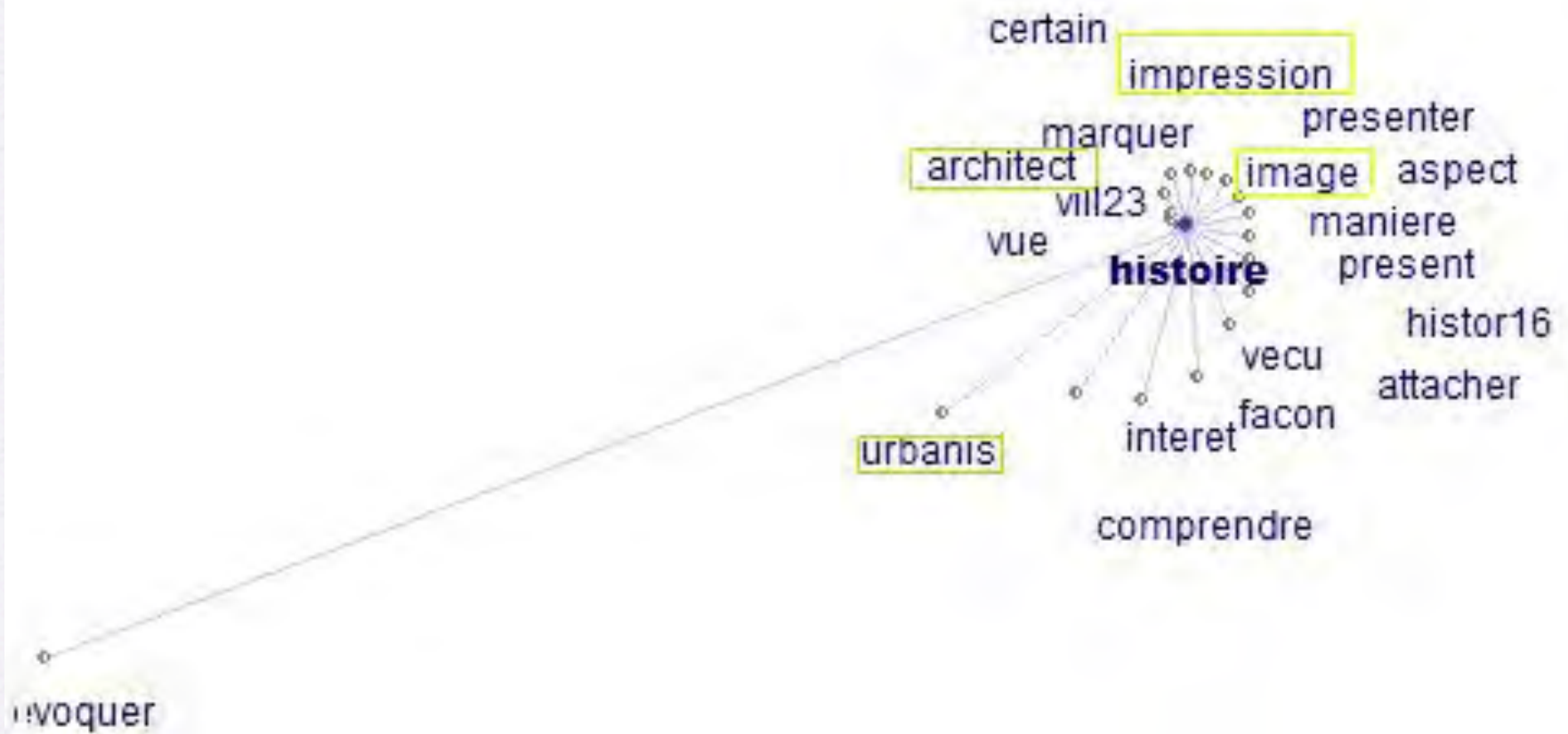


Production Interview E7

Some results



A town with no history?



villeurbaine

Construction of tower blocks 1934



The tower
blocks today

The tower blocks

- "The identity of Villeurbanne" (N32), "a symbol of the town" (N34)
- "Sometimes people have it in for Villeurbanne, sometimes all they know is the tower blocks and for them that's all there is: Villeurbanne is the tower blocks. But that's simply not true." (N07)
- "But for the people living in the tower blocks, it's 'us tower block people', the rest don't count (N33)

One may legitimately ask whether, without this collection of buildings built to assert Villeurbanne's identity in the face of the hegemonic tendencies of Lyon, Villeurbanne as a separate municipality would still exist.

Clémentçon, AS. & al. (2004). *Les Gratte-ciel de Villeurbanne*.
Les éditions de l'imprimeur, p. 15.

Villeurbanne: a town without history?

- The tower block represents a symbolic capital uniting past and present (socialist culture).
- We find key figures, names, symbols (Lazare Goujon, Charles Hernu).
- But an absence of real historical symbols (e.g. no dating) and of a tangible heritage in people's minds.

**Disappearance of
tangible traces of the
town's history or the
disintegration of
collective memory...?**

Different ways of telling the town's working class history

- The working class history is evidenced primarily in the architecture of Villeurbanne: "Little workers' houses", "factories", "town houses" described variously depending on the interviewees' status (residents or mediators)
- Residents mention traces of the past more, while the mediators focus on the traces of the present .
- The results of the mind maps are essential in analysing the absence of spatial symbols.



Despite the lack of physical traces in the space for residents.

The mediators have a nostalgic memory of industrialisation...



Relationship between collective and autobiographical memory

- Working-class memory manifests itself through the **narrative of autobiographical memories**: "a working-class grandfather," "Sunday dinner", "stories passed down through the family" ...
- Autobiographical memory draws more on a spatial framework: **the working-class setting**
- Such traces persist in **oral** memory but even more so in the physical space of the town ...
- In the mind maps, there are **few industrial** sites to be found in the town area.


```

20 |      rue+
19 |      rappeler+
18 |      tonkin
17 | mere+eglise+pere+grand_clemen
16 |      saint+famille+
15 |      install+er ..neuve+epicerie+ marche+
14 | gilletancien<pain+ ..vieill<usine+grand-pere+
13 | quartier+ ... ..origine+buersgrand-mere+
12 |      italie rasterposta+l
11 | .. ..construire.fille+
10 |      siecle+ .. italien+carte+olivier+
9 |   immigr+er ....maman+portugais+
8 | ouvrier<petit+ ..religi<etranger+
7 |   industri<ecole+ guerre+melange+pays
6 |      boite+ |      commercant+ pi
.voiture+
5 |      communaut< |      tram<
...desservir.
4 |      population+ |      ve
...boire.
3 |      dimanche+boucher+ |      agre:
...nuit+
2 | |      saint
.course+
1 |      fenetre+ |
0 |-----+-----magasin+surf:
.aller..mang+er
1 |      travail< |      boulanger+
2 |      cre+erlvonnais+

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18 |      rue+
17 |      saint+famille+
16 |      install+er ..neuve+epicerie+ marche+
15 | gilletancien<pain+ ..vieill<usine+grand-pere+
14 | quartier+ ... ..origine+buersgrand-mere+
13 |      italie rasterposta+l
12 | .. ..construire.fille+
11 |      siecle+ .. italien+carte+olivier+
10 |   immigr+er ....maman+portugais+
9 | ouvrier<petit+ ..religi<etranger+
8 |   industri<ecole+ guerre+melange+pays
7 |      boite+ |      commercant+ pi
6 |      communaut< |      tram<
5 |      population+ |      ve
4 |      dimanche+boucher+ |      agre:
3 |      saint
2 |      fenetre+ |
1 |      travail< |      boulanger+
0 |      cre+erlvonnais+

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A working-class past marked by the arrival of populations from outside the town.

- The history of immigrant populations arriving in Villeurbanne is often associated with labour and industrial activities.

"Villeurbanne was works and factories. there were many immigrants who came from all over and it all went really well". "It was really great"; "It was really a working-class town." (H7)

- Diversity of population and architecture were linked.
- From this spring the strong claims to social diversity among the current population.

Some broad results

- Differing memories of residents and mediators — currently being addressed in the Mayor's Reports (Elico)
- Strong links between autobiographical memory and collective memory.
- Differences between oral memory and spatial memory.
- The importance and richness of complementary tools in studying the image of the town (triangulation of data and methods).

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