

"Of the wanting that there is, and of what is not in me": the memorial phenomenon in schools, through the work of four women (Porto Alegre and São Leopoldo/RS)

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Abstract

The article aims to problematize the constitution of memory spaces in four centenary schools in Rio Grande do Sul and to analyze the work of the women responsible for these places. The study, which is part of the field of the History of Education, uses the concepts of historical-educational heritage and guardians of memory as a reference. Methodologically, the museums and memorials of the institutions were visited and the teachers who work there were interviewed. We found that these places, created to preserve memory, tell an edifying story of the institutional past. At the same time, we observed that the power of these spaces depends very much on the willingness and commitment of these women. We concluded that there is a mismatch between the dedication of the teachers and the school's gestures of preservation, indicating the importance of greater investment in the construction of memory policies, which are not just centered on individual actions, but foster more fruitful collective activities, thus expanding the strength of the concept of historical-educational heritage.

Keywords: Places of school memories. Historical-educational heritage. Guardians of memory. History of educational institutions.

"Do querer que há, e do que não há em mim": o fenômeno memorial em escolas, pelo trabalho de quatro mulheres (Porto Alegre e São Leopoldo/RS)

Resumo

O artigo tem como objetivo problematizar a constituição de espaços de memória em quatro escolas centenárias do Rio Grande do Sul e analisar a atuação das responsáveis por esses lugares. O estudo, inscrito no campo da História da Educação, toma como referência os conceitos de patrimônio

histórico-educativo e guardiãs de memória. Metodologicamente, foram visitados os museus e memoriais das instituições e entrevistadas as professoras que lá trabalham. Constatou-se que esses lugares, criados para preservar a memória, narram uma história edificante do passado institucional. Ao mesmo tempo, observa-se que a potência desses espaços depende muito da disposição e entrega dessas mulheres. Conclui-se que há um descompasso entre a dedicação das professoras e os gestos de guardar das escolas, indicativo da importância de maiores investimentos na construção de políticas de memória, não apenas centradas em ações individuais, mas fomentem atividades coletivas mais fecundas, ampliando, assim, a força do conceito do patrimônio histórico-educativo.

Palavras-chave: Lugares de memórias escolares. Patrimônio histórico-educativo. Guardiãs de memória. História das instituições educativas.

"Del querer que hay, y del que no hay en mí": el fenómeno memorial en las escuelas, a través del trabajo de cuatro mujeres (Porto Alegre y São Leopoldo/RS)

2 Resumen

El artículo tiene como objetivo problematizar la constitución de espacios de memoria en cuatro escuelas centenarias de Rio Grande del Sur y analizar las acciones de las responsables de esos lugares. El estudio, inscrito en el campo de la Historia de la Educación, toma como referencia los conceptos de patrimonio histórico-educativo y guardianes de la memoria. Metodológicamente se visitaron los museos y memoriales de las instituciones y fueron entrevistadas las docentes que allí laboran. Se constató que estos lugares, creados para preservar la memoria, cuentan una historia edificante del pasado institucional. Al mismo tiempo, se observa que el poder de estos espacios depende en gran medida de la voluntad y dedicación de estas mujeres. Se concluye que existe un desfase entre la dedicación de las docentes y los gestos protectores de las escuelas, indicativo de la importancia de mayores inversiones en la construcción de políticas de memoria, no centren sólo en acciones individuales, sino que alienten actividades colectivas más fructíferas, ampliando, así, la fuerza del concepto de patrimonio histórico-educativo.

Palabras clave: Lugares de memoria escolar. Patrimonio histórico-educativo. Guardianes de la memoria. Historia de las instituciones educativas.

Why places for the memory of schools?

Memory and heritage inhabit the present. Immersed in this fast, fluid time, we have anchors in these master words that allow us to better situate ourselves in the different temporal strata (Hartog, 2017). In this sense, there is a contemporary profusion of preservationist practices, and of the creation of places of memory¹ (Nora, 1993), which also affect schools.

This study is part of the field of the History of Education and takes as its reference the idea of historical-educational heritage, highlighting cultural assets that should be safeguarded and that extend far beyond the exceptionality of buildings and the trajectories of notable teachers, for example. The concept may still resonate as a novelty for many teachers and students, despite having been among the interests of historians of education for some decades (Felgueiras, 2011; Souza, 2013). Oliveira and Chaloba (2023 p. 4), when investigating preservation practices in school collections in Brazil and Portugal, also noted how recent these practices are, since it was only in the 1990s that investment began to be made in building the first places of memory in schools, and these actions are directly related to "[...] the theoretical and methodological changes that the History of Education has undergone in recent decades in different parts of the Western world".

In this context, movements are being strengthened that call for different materialities of the school and its agents to be kept. Consequently, there is a visible desire to set up museums, memorials, historical archives and documentation centers, based on a political understanding of the legacy of educational institutions, to be passed on to future generations. This is not yet a large-scale movement in Brazil, but it is undeniable that it exists and is growing, especially if we consider the relationship between universities and schools.

Inspired by the verses of Caetano Veloso's song "O Quereres" (1984), observing the rise of the memorial phenomenon in schools as a symptom of the Present Time, this article seeks to problematize the constitution of memory spaces² in centenary schools in Rio Grande do Sul, using the actions of the people responsible for these places, in the light of the idea of "memory keepers" as a reference for analysis (Gomes, 1996). Four public schools were chosen: in Porto Alegre, Colégio Farroupilha, Colégio Nossa Senhora do Bom Conselho, Colégio Americano, and in São Leopoldo, a municipality in the metropolitan region, Colégio Sinodal.

Right at the start of the research, the question was asked: why did these schools create these places? When were they conceived? A discussion emerged about the "will to memory" (Nora, 1993; Vidal; Paulilo, 2020) of each of them, with the intention of producing a narrative of school memory, by safeguarding evidence of the institutional past and publicizing it to the community.

Based on these questions, the study seeks to critically explore the four spaces of school memory³, taking into account the relationships that the technical managers have established with their professional activity over the years. Therefore, in parallel to the discussion about the purpose of the place in existing, we are interested in scrutinizing the role of those who take care of them so that they remain alive. We postulate that these people act as key characters in the movement and organization of the place.

The schools and their desire for memory

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Given that this research seeks to identify and understand the "will to memory" (Nora, 1993; Vidal; Paulilo, 2020) of four schools, we bring historical aspects to the text, as well as reflections on the constitution of their spaces for keeping traces of past materialities. First of all, it must be said that all of them cater to generations of students from wealthy backgrounds, both in Porto Alegre and São Leopoldo.

To this end, we present this table 1, with the intention of better visualizing when each school was founded and when memory was institutionalized.

Table 1 – Date the schools were founded, and the spaces created

Institution	Foundation	Creation of memory space
Colégio Americano	1885	1994
Colégio Farroupilha	1886	2002
Colégio N ^o Sr ^a Bom Conselho	1905	2013
Colégio Sinodal	1936	1996

Source: Table 1 constructed by the authors based on data available in the places of memory researched.

If we pay attention to when the places of memory were created (Nora, 1993), we can see that their proximity in time is a sign of the power of memory in the Present Time (Hartog, 2006). The schools were founded at the end of the 19th century and the first decades of the 20th century, but it was only after the 1990s that thought was given to building spaces to preserve what remained of the past. This indicates that the postulates put forward by Nora (1993), based on the patrimonialization of certain places in France, were already spreading beyond the European continent.

Having said that, we would like to highlight some information about the history of the schools chosen for this study. Colégio Farroupilha⁴, a secular institution, was an initiative of the German bourgeoisie in Porto Alegre, who designed it to serve the children of this ethnic community (Jacques, 2013). Initially, the school was housed in rooms in the Evangelical Community in the historic center of the city. A few years later, in 1895, the building that would later be known as the Old House was inaugurated. The school remained at this address for 67 years until it was transferred to its current headquarters, with grandiose buildings in a highly elite⁵ neighborhood. In 2002, the "Deutscher Hilfsverein Memorial to Colégio Farroupilha" was created. According to Jacques (2013, p. 58), "[...] in 2002, it was born out of the need to tell and preserve the history of the institution, its community, as well as the history of education in Porto Alegre"⁶.

The second school investigated is Colégio Nossa Senhora do Bom Conselho, founded in 1905 by the Franciscan Sisters of Penance and Christian Charity. This educational movement began in 1900, when three nuns of the order moved from the city center, from the Nossa Senhora dos Anjos school, to attend to the children in a rented house in the Moinhos de Vento neighborhood, the "Moinhos de Vento Neighborhood School", as it was known (Witt, 2013)⁷. Over time, a plot of land was acquired in the same neighborhood, also occupied by families of German origin, on which the school was planned to be built, as well as housing for the Sisters. Since its foundation, the institution had a boarding school for girls, which was in operation until 1960⁸.

The Bom Conselho School Memorial was conceived in 2010 and inaugurated in 2013. It was built with the advice and curation of museologist Luciana Oliveira de Brito, who was hired for this purpose (Witt, 2013). Currently, the space follows the original organization of when it was designed, maintaining a permanent exhibition of institutional memory.

To present the third institution, we need to go back to 1885, when Colégio Americano began its activities as Colégio Evangélico Misto nº1, in a rented building in the Historic Center of Porto Alegre. The founder, Reverend João Correa, sent by the Methodist Church of Montevideo, set up the school (Witt, 2013). In 1945, it moved to its current location, on land bought by the Women's Division of the Methodist Church in the United States. It offered classical, scientific and home economics courses. It was recognized as the first school to create a secretarial course in Brazil, in 1952 (Almeida, 2013a).

In 1994, the Bispo Isac Aço Historical Museum was founded in honor of the last bishop who worked at the institution. Its origins date back to 1931, with the integrated Museum of Natural Sciences and History. When they split up, the Museum became responsible for the memories of the Instituto de Porto Alegre (Porto Alegre Institute - IPA)⁹ and the Colégio Americano, thus establishing its roots in the house where the bishops lived. The Rede Metodista is currently facing a difficult financial situation, which is directly affecting the Museum. Since the beginning of the research, in 2022, the Museum was closed to the external community and, from 2023, it was also inaccessible to the internal community.

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The next school, Sinodal, is the only one in São Leopoldo, where the first German immigrants arrived in Rio Grande do Sul. It was there that the Rio-Grandense Synod¹⁰ set up small schools with a view to improving the study conditions of the population. As well as being religiously active in its community, this network also plays an important role in education. Over the years, the Rio Grande do Sul Synod took control of different primary schools, but there was still a lack of an institution that represented the specific values of the community. It was against this backdrop that, in 1935, at the 42nd Council of the Rio-Grandense Synod, a proposal emerged to build a high school to follow on from the education taught in the primary schools.

Moved by the 50th anniversary celebrations, the Synod began to think about how to preserve its past. Thus, in 1996, the Professor Arnildo Hoppen School Museum was created on the initiative of Lilian Sofia Saenger, a Fine Arts teacher, who took on the task of gathering memories of the school, the Sinodal network and its community. Located where the first boarding school used to be, the museum is made up of two two-storey semi-detached houses with different themed rooms.

Based on this information, which highlights historical aspects of the schools, it is possible to identify singularities and differences among them. They are all initiatives of ethnic and/or religious communities made up of people from other countries. This demonstrates their interest in educating the younger generations, especially at the end of the 19th century/beginning of the 20th century, when the state still invested little in public schools.

Both Colégio Farroupilha and Rede Sínodo, in São Leopoldo, were founded in the same year, 1886, by German immigrants and descendants, but Colégio Farroupilha has always been a secular institution, while Sinodal is Lutheran. From this perspective, it can be seen that three of the schools were established by religious organizations: Catholic, Methodist and Lutheran. With regard to the school buildings, it can be seen that they are monumental constructions, designed to provoke a kind of reverence from people in front of the institutions.

It's worth noting that two of the schools were intended to educate girls: Colégio Nossa Senhora do Bom Conselho and Colégio Americano, Catholic and Methodist respectively. Following the country's education policies as the 20th century progressed, they developed co-education and adjusted to national guidelines in order to continue to exist.

Schools, as well as their places of memory, exist because of the actions of those who work or study there. Next, we'll discuss the journeys of the four women who are at the forefront of the gestures of guardianship in schools.

'Follow suit'¹¹: Who keeps school memory?

Ângela de Castro Gomes (1996) understands the guardians of memory as subjects responsible for a collection, who identify deeply with the strength of the gestures of guarding, absorbing the narratives of the groups they represent. They are people who have the legitimacy to speak for the collective, they are seen as those who have the job of keeping, remembering and sharing the preserved past, they influence and are influenced by the memories of the group for whom they are a kind of spokesperson. As well as being important for the preservation and control of the place, the guardians are part of the process, part of the place and its significance.

In the research, these people are all women. Far from taking this for granted, it's a fact to be taken aback by, considering the relationships that have historically been established between guardianship and female memory. 'In the theatre of memory, women are faint shadows [...],' says Michelle Perrot (2011, p. 18), referring to the fact that history has privileged men in terms of occupying public spaces, politics and society as a whole, displacing them to the margins, making them invisible. In this way, women were the ones destined to take care of the house, the children, the husbands, the family memories, by looking after photographs, invitations, tickets, letters. These are 'silent memories' (Perrot, 2011, p. 131), practices passed down from mothers to daughters, even in the present day, when women are in other positions, previously mostly reserved for men.

Methodologically, the memory spaces of the school institutions were visited more than once. At each visit, the importance of exercising critical observation was emphasized, a process built on the experience of the historian in contact with the objects of study, according to Tura (2003). Afterwards, the people technically responsible for the sites were interviewed, in an attempt to promote conditions in which they could recall their personal and professional journeys and assess the conditions of their current profession, using the postulates of Oral History (Portelli, 2016, Thomson, 1997). It was decided to create an interview divided into two strands: in the first, *Who is she*, the idea was to encourage them to explain their life, work and training paths. In the second, *She, the place of memory and the institution*, the idea was to encourage them to narrate their relationship with the school and their work.

The four interviews took place on scheduled dates, with the questions sent out in advance. The aim was to avoid possible discomfort by not knowing the content of the questions beforehand. According to Errante (2000), many narrators prepare for the event and, depending on their disposition towards the subject, the recollection will have one result or another. A kind of decision about what to say indicates that the interviewee, in a way, *negotiates* the sharing of their narratives.

As mentioned before, we are discussing whether these women are in fact the guardians or administrative caretakers of the places of memory researched. What relationships do they establish with the institutions in which they work? So that the following text can make sense to the reader, we present this

table 2, with the aim of indicating aspects of their journeys considered relevant to the research.

Table 2 – Who are they?

	Alice R Jacques	Irmã Carla da Silva	Suzana Oderisch	Leni Schneider
Age	64 years old	40 years old	59 years old	65 years old
Children	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Education	PhD in Education, Pedagogue	Degree in Visual Arts	Degree in History	Bachelor's degree in Social Sciences,
Parents' profession	Mother: housewife Father: insurance agent	Mother: housewife Father: fisherman	Mother: housewife Father: engineer	Both parents: farmers
Institution	Colégio Farroupilha	Colégio Bom Conselho	Colégio Americano	Colégio Sinodal
Entered school	1985	2021	2008	2011
City	Porto Alegre	Porto Alegre	Porto Alegre	São Leopoldo
Space name	Colégio Farroupilha Memorial	Colégio Bom Conselho Memorial	Bishop Isac Aço Museum	Arnildo Hoppen School Museum
Entering the space	2001	2021	2019	2011
How the entry took place	Built project: creation of space	Religious mission transfer	Invitation until retirement	Invitation after retirement
Role on site	Coordinator	Head of Department	Interim	Coordinator

Source: Table 2 done by the authors, based on the interviews conducted in 2023.

Based on this exhibition, we reflect on aspects of their itineraries and their links with the school, focusing on the singularities of their life, training and work, so that we can then move on to other issues.

Alice Jacques leads the Colégio Farroupilha Memorial. A widow, she has a 28-year-old daughter. Born in the countryside of Rio Grande do Sul, she went to religious schools and, according to her account, her interest in memory was sparked by her father, who used to buy magazines, books and encyclopedias, giving his daughter a taste for reading and researching.

Regarding her career at Colégio Farroupilha, she joined it in 1985 as a teacher in the initial years of schooling, and then in 1990 she joined the pedagogical coordination team. After changes in the school's management team, the idea emerged to build the Memorial, which was inaugurated in 2002. Since its conception, she has been responsible for the space. However, she wasn't the first one to think about the importance of the collection. Literacy teacher Lia Mostardeiro, who taught at the school for fifty years before retiring¹², began to gather together archives from both the school and the Associação Beneficente e Educacional, the institution's sponsor. Thus began the process of selecting the material that would later make up the institutional collection. From 2010 onwards, Professor Alice invested in her academic training, with Master's and Doctorate degrees from the Postgraduate Program in Education/PUCRS¹³, specializing in the History of Education, a field of study in which she continues to be active, with participation in Research Groups and events in the area. She has therefore been working professionally at the school for almost forty years and at the Memorial for over two decades, organizing and collecting collections, researching, curating exhibitions and producing teaching activities for the school's students.

During the interview, we asked her about her work. It is clear from her speech how much this place *takes over her viscera*. She emphasizes that her duty of memory to society is to ensure that everything that has been given to her in trust, as a representative of the place, is respected and preserved.

Sister Carla da Silva is currently in charge of the Memorial at Colégio Bom Conselho, and is also responsible for the institution's secretarial activities. Born in Bahia, she is the youngest of the four women, has five siblings, and is the daughter of a housewife mother and a fisherman father. She said that she heard the "call to religious life" (Silva, 2023) at a very young age, and has dedicated herself to Franciscan work ever since. She took over her duties at Bom Conselho at the end of 2021, after the departure of the former Sister who was responsible for these services. She says that she has lived in Rio Grande do Sul since 2006, during which time she taught classes to girls who were

entering Franciscan life. When she took over the secretariat, she was *given* the Memorial and, with it, the responsibility of preserving the place so that it was organized for visitors. It can be seen that carrying out so many duties restricted the time she had to devote to caring for the school's historical collections.

We noticed that, even though he has no training or experience in running a “place of memories” (Nora, 1993), he shows an interest in the activity. She commented that she is concerned about how this collection will be for future generations, so that students can enjoy and have access to what was produced by the school and the Franciscan Sisters. She emphasizes the importance of protecting what remains of the past, pointing out that this interest came from the Sisters in 2000, but that, at that time, the goal of building a memorial space did not exist.

The Memorial is presented as a permanent exhibition and includes documents representing the school's achievements up until 2010. Sister Carla pointed out that there is no intention of changing the current format, which could diminish its strength as a “place of memory” (Nora, 1993). However, she talked about an idea, still in its infancy, to use other parts of the building to expand the exhibition, displaying material closer to the present time, without altering what has already been done.

It was time to reflect on the narrative of Suzana Oderisch, who is responsible for the Bishop Isac Aço Museum at the Colégio Americano. She is a widow and mother of two grown-up children. Born in Porto Alegre, her father was an engineer and her mother a housewife. She said that, after growing up, she saw her mother decide to study nursing, graduate and start working in the field, which is also a caring profession. Her predecessor at the museum, an art teacher at the school, was looking forward to retirement and wanted to move away from some of her duties, including the museum. We wondered why this teacher wanted to leave the Museum. Was she just waiting for her work at the school to end?

At the time of the research, the space was closed, but before that, Suzana Oderisch tried to resume museum activities, organized photos and helped teachers during pedagogical practices. She was also working as a history teacher at the same institution. As a history teacher, she understands her role at the head of the museum but regrets not having the resources to do more and better, “I don't have any training, I know the importance of taking courses,

looking for the right techniques, I wish I had the time" (Oderisch, 2023). She said that she had always had the practice of taking her students to visit the site, relating the content she had seen in class to the collection. She enjoyed taking part in the events promoted by the museum, not just as a teacher, but as a member of the community.

However, as mentioned earlier, due to the institution's financial difficulties, the museum is now closed. On her return, after the worst moments of the Covid-19 pandemic, in 2022, the interviewee commented that she hoped that the Museum would receive resources, that she would have a greater workload in this role so that she could dedicate herself more, in her words, "I am saddened to have this collection available and not be able to offer real and meaningful work" (Oderisch, 2023). The financial issue of institutions seems to be closely related to their memory spaces, i.e. they are the first to be hit when resources are lacking. How can museums and memorials be prioritized if there is no capital to pay staff salaries, for example?

Leni Schneider, a member of the Lutheran Church, is in charge of the Arnildo Hoppen School Museum at Colégio Sinodal. Originally from Santa Catarina, she is married and has an adult son. Daughter of a farmer father and a housewife mother, she went to São Leopoldo to complete her studies. At that time, while still a teenager, she began her history with Sinodal. Her life is intertwined with the institution, as she has been building ties with the school and the network for almost half a century. After taking over the Museum, she sought out courses in Museology, offered by the University of Vale do Rio dos Sinos - UNISINOS, in order to better perform her duties. She herself leads guided tours for the community and researchers, and is also responsible for events involving former students.

Throughout her narrative, she emphasizes that she returned to the school after retirement because of the sentimental value that this institution represents in her life. This is yet another indication of the strong relationship between the teacher and the place where she works, perhaps a certain difficulty in letting go. Leni explains that she came back because she felt that the Museum needed to continue to exist, only then would the children of the community be able to understand who they were, think about their future and discover where they came from.

As such, she took up this post in 2011, but commented that her former responsible, teacher Lilian Sofia Saenger¹⁴, who was in charge of the Museum's administration between 1996 and 2011, often visited her so as to help her with the various activities. She remembers with nostalgia the time they worked together, and without embarrassment, she credits her predecessor for all the work she did, including organizing, inventorying and cataloguing documents. And so, she follows the same guidelines initiated by Lilian.

Leni Schneider continues to seek to safeguard the institution's memories, maintains archival and museum organization activities, welcomes researchers and promotes access to documentation. When she expresses her thoughts on the need to preserve the school's memory, when she participates and gets involved with student visits for class activities, she shows intimacy, perhaps because she feels an important part of this institutional past.

Having presented, albeit in broad outline, the itineraries of the four teachers, we moved on to problematize their narratives, with a view to building connections between their journeys and the relationship they built with each school's memory space. By examining the narratives produced in interviews, together with the observations made, we tried to assess whether these women can be recognized as "guardians" of the place where they work.

Three of them are mature women, over sixty. Most of them are mothers, an existential dimension culturally associated with the idea of caring. The interviewee with no children is dedicated to religious life, so caring is also an important part of her career. Even though they belong to different social strata, they all had mothers who were housewives, which leads us to think that this model of caring for the home, involving several generations of women, has been transposed to these places of memory.

All four have degrees, although only Susana Oderisch still works as a teacher. Alice Jacques has a degree in Pedagogy, Sister Carla da Silva has a teaching degree and a degree in Visual Arts, Suzana Oderisch has a degree in History and Leni Schneider has a degree in Social Sciences. From this point of commonality, we can see that each one's academic background, directly linked to education, is in line with their work in the institutional memory space.

Thinking about the interfaces between the narrators and their workspaces, other reflections are important. Alice conceived the Farroupilha School Memorial in 2001 and has been in charge of it ever since. Sister Carla was

given a religious mission at Colégio Bom Conselho and has been in charge of the school's secretariat and the Memorial since the end of 2021. Suzana received an invitation to be the interim head of the Bishop Isac Aço Museum in 2019, as she was in pre-retirement¹⁵. Finally, Leni worked for Rede Sinodal, the parent company of Colégio Sinodal, until she retired and, in 2011, was invited to return as coordinator of the place of memory.

When asked about the places where they work, they all said that they only work for this institution, which indicates that they are more likely to build emotional bonds. They reported having a fraternal, almost familial feeling for the school and its community. Almost all of them brought up delicate situations involving their own health and that of family members, and said that the welcome they received from the management and colleagues was a necessary anchor for them to stay well and healthy. Feeling that they belonged to an organization seems to have been the difference in overcoming the moments of pain.

With the exception of Sister Carla, who recently joined Colégio Bom Conselho, the others have been part of the schools' staff for many years: Alice joined in 1985; Suzana, in 2008 and Leni actually started working at Colégio Sinodal in 2011, although she retired from Rede Sinodal years earlier. The length of time they have worked at the same institution is another important factor in building emotional ties with the memory of the place.

It is possible to see their involvement with the schools where they work. During the interviews, to varying degrees, they expressed feelings of concern, care, attachment, jealousy, zeal, compassion and ownership for these places of memory, as well as for the schools. In this sense, it is worth thinking about Alice Jacques' challenges in producing her Master's Dissertation and Doctoral Thesis, given that she was historically researching the Colégio Farroupilha, and therefore had to find it strange and not allow herself to be seduced by the entity, transformed into an object of study.

Sister Carla is the opposite of Alice in terms of time at the institution and age: while the latter has been at the school for almost four decades, the former has only been at Colégio Bom Conselho for two years. On the other hand, they are both members of the management teams. Alice took over the pedagogical coordination in the 1990s, then the Memorial and, when necessary, takes over the management of Farroupilha on an interim basis. Sister

Carla is responsible for the school's secretariat, looking after the other sisters, managing the affairs of the former pupils and the Memorial, among other duties. As well as being the youngest interviewee with the shortest time at the school, she also manages the most recent memorial of all those analyzed.

Suzana Oderisch joined Colégio Americano fourteen years after the Museum was created. As soon as she started teaching full-time at the institution, she began to participate more actively in the school community. She happily commented that she had witnessed "the golden years of the Museum!" (Oderisch, 2023), the first fifteen years of the 21st century, when, for her, everything worked, there were interns, activities, the presence of students, family members on visits, university students doing their research. With sadness, she recalled the beginning of the end of this space, which is possibly already doomed to oblivion because the institution is facing a financial crisis. In those fifteen years, she has seen and lived through many flavors and discomforts as a member of this school community.

Leni Schneider is the longest-serving narrator, with almost fifty years of commitment to the Rede Sinodal. She studied at a school that belonged to the network and took part in the theater classes that took place at Sinodal. She used to walk along the sidewalks of the school, even before the museum was conceived. Her memories of her time as a student in the drama club are organized along with the old costumes, photographs and drawings that are now part of the collection of the museum she coordinates. During her speech, she paused, reminiscing about the past. She is proud to be there with her job, confiding that she came back for the school, but also for herself. It's clear that her memories are intertwined with those of the school; the feeling of belonging to that space makes her feel at *home* while she's at the museum.

Also, in this direction, how do they understand their relationship with the space? We chose excerpts from the interviews that highlight the subjectivities of the narrators. When Alice says that the Colégio Farroupilha Memorial "is her soul" (Jacques, 2023), you can feel the weight of these words, she expresses apprehension when imagining that this place might be forgotten when she is no longer there. She fears that everything that has been built will be lost, that it will become nothing more than a permanent display of *old school things*. We can understand this fear as an expression of a certain sense of ownership that she lets show, since, consciously or not, that place *is hers*, it exists through her dedication. This is how she put it: "[...] this space is not mine,

but I feel like it is, I see myself in every object that is placed there, this is all the work of a lifetime, my lifetime" (Jacques, 2023).

In a different moment to Alice's, which carries the established feeling of belonging, Sister Carla's speech highlights the moment when she enthusiastically reports her ideas for the future of the Colégio Bom Conselho Memorial. She expresses her desire to organize the collection, to move forward with this activity.

Suzana Oderisch's narrative is once again linked to the institution's financial crisis, which has already been mentioned. She spoke about the Bishop Isac Aço Museum with a heavy heart, sometimes bordering on disbelief that it is collapsing. She reflected on the feeling of powerlessness in the face of the facts. In her words, there is a fear that if the school closes, the museum will be sentenced to oblivion. We can see that both Alice and Suzana verbalize this fear of forgetfulness, which could lead to the memory of their schools being erased.

In turn, Leni, after retiring, returned as a school employee, "[...] not out of financial necessity, but because of the emotional attachment that the school and the Museum represent in my life" (Schneider, 2023). She said that the Museum needs to continue to exist, that the community needs it open. It seems to us that, even indirectly, she believes that she is the only one who could carry on the legacy of the previous administrator. It is clear that she would suffer if the space were to close for any reason; she didn't even mention oblivion, but she showed the same fear as the previous narrators. We therefore draw attention to the perception of this feeling of uncertainty about what the future holds for the memory spaces that affect Alice, Leni and Suzana, bringing them closer together.

When we analyze some of the similarities between the four women, we see that they all have degrees. Almost all of them have adult children. All four express an understanding of the need for schools to maintain their memory spaces. As for how they carry out their activities, they all work alone. This makes one wonder how little the institutions seem to invest in their memory, as they maintain these places with only one employee. It's important to remember that, with the exception of Leni Schneider, the others take on other tasks that consume their time and energy. They are therefore not fully available for the work of *guarding*. Thinking about the specific role of each of them in the

memory space, we have to consider the possible difficulties of the daily routine of a solitary job, because as well as working hard to meet different demands, they don't have anyone to share what they do in the museums and memorials, they don't have anyone to share the challenges, anxieties and joys of their activities with.

As for the singularities, after the investigation, we are led to conclude that Alice Jacques and Leni Schneider can be considered guardians of memory (Gomes, 1996), because they *live* those places, they are deeply involved in what concerns the institution's past and the community recognizes them as interlocutors with memory. Their actions are geared towards safeguarding the school's vestiges from the past, but they are also driven by the present.

Thinking of those who began the work of saving school collections, we must pay tribute to teachers Lia Mostardeiro, from Colégio Farroupilha and Lilian Sofia Saenger, from Colégio Sinodal. Here we risk also calling them memory keepers. Their personal lives were intertwined with the institution in which they worked, dedicating themselves to it almost messianically and, in this almost devotion, caring for school memory was among their interests and activities. They were, it could be said, forerunners in the actions that led to the gestures of keeping memories of different temporalities at Farroupilha and Sinodal.

However, how do we think about the relationship between Suzana Oderisch and Sister Carla da Silva and the memory spaces they are responsible for? Different factors, above all financial for one and temporal for the other, make their work difficult. Suzana, faced with the imminent bankruptcy of Colégio Americano, can do little for the Bishop Isac Aço Museum. Sister Carla shows appreciation for the Memorial and seems keen to expand its activities. However, she is hindered by the time factor, as she took on this role only two years ago, amidst many other tasks, many of them directly related to organizing the working lives of students and teachers, activities that are typical of a school secretary.

Reflecting on the objective and subjective crossings in the work of these four women makes us think about how fine the line can be between wanting to and being able to do things, in other words, how individual desires can come up against institutional obstacles. In this sense, the provocation of Chico Buarque's verse "look to the example of the women of Athens" leads us

to assume that they are all capable of giving of themselves, in different ways, considering that it seems that they don't carry out their activities as if it were something banal, ordinary, but rather revere their place of work, fighting for the memory of the school not to be forgotten in the face of such an uncertain future.

Conclusions

This research has produced yet another study in the field of the History of Education, involving four places of school memory in Porto Alegre and São Leopoldo/RS. This is a subject that still has a lot to be explored and which is the subject of powerful discussions.

Considering the objective of problematizing the constitution of memory spaces in four centenary schools in Rio Grande do Sul, we went to meet those responsible for the administration of these spaces, with reference to the concepts of historical-educational heritage and guardians of memory. We recall that the idea that constitutes being a guardian includes something that transcends the exercise of technical tasks; it carries something of a gift, of affection for the gestures of guarding, from the perspective of taking on the memory of a group and caring for it, defending it and protecting it.

We end this text by reflecting on the desires of these schools when they set out to build a place for their memories. The actions carried out by these spaces in an attempt to preserve the past are part of the process of building historical-educational heritage. By exercising critical observation, we can see that escaping oblivion by producing a beautiful narrative about the school's past, building it up for both the community and society, is what drives these institutions. In the intentions of what *should be* remembered, there are always deliberate erasures. Places of memory, whether at school or not, appeal to sensitize and produce adherence to certain discourses, often laudatory.

When we analyze the gestures of keeping and their relationship with those who run them, we see that the power of museums and memorials depends a lot on the willingness and commitment of those who work there. The spaces investigated here cannot *fight alone*. They need institutional support if they are to continue to exist. However, the research concludes that there is a mismatch between the dedication of those responsible and the schools' desire for memory. Returning to the verses that title this text, we can see "the will that

is”, in other words, the memorial intention in the four schools, with effective heritage gestures, largely driven by the work of the teachers, but also “the will that is not”, which indicates the importance of greater investment in the construction of memory policies that are not just centered on individual actions, but aim to foster more fruitful actions, attributing value to the school's assets in a broad sense, thus expanding the strength of the concept of historical-educational heritage.

Notes

1. Pierre Nora's expression (1993), “places of memory” created to preserve memory, coined with the intention and movement of telling a narrative about a past that no longer exists, where memory itself is no longer enough to explain it. This concept is already well established, a consensus among historians and archivists, so we have chosen not to refer to it every time.
2. Throughout the text, space is used in Michel de Certeau's (1994) definition, as a reference to place. The author understands space as a practiced place, with movement and fluidity. Places of memory are understood to be these spaces mentioned by de Certeau, spaces of memory.
3. It should be noted that two of the school places of memory analyzed opted for recognition as a Museum and the other two use the term Memorial. For Museum, see the concept of the International Committee of Museums - ICOM (2022). For Memorial, see Axt (2013).
4. At the time of its foundation, the school was called Knabenschule des Deutschen Hilfsverein (Boys' School of the German Benevolent Association). Later, when it began to receive mixed classes, it was recognized as Deutschen Hilfsvereinsschule (German Society School). During the period of nationalization of education, it adopted the name Farroupilha, which is still used today (Grimaldi and Almeida, 2013).
5. Urban development led to the expansion of schools to areas other than the central zones, a recurring phenomenon in Brazil's most populous cities. This expansion was accompanied by the school communities, which gradually began to inhabit the schools' surroundings (Bressan, 2013).
6. The research project, coordinated by Professor Maria Helena Câmara Bastos and funded by CNPq, produced two books, *Do Deutscher Hilfsverein ao Colégio Farroupilha/RS: Memórias e histórias (1858-2008)*, vol. I and II, in 2013, which present articles related to the history of the school.
7. There are artifacts that make up the collection of the Santa Casa Cultural Historical Center, which tell a little about the memories of these nuns as they moved back and forth from the Historical Center to Moinhos de Vento. In an interview with Silva, 2023.
8. Bom Conselho, s/d, Electronic doc.
9. For more information on the history of the Porto Alegre Institute, see Lima, 2014.
10. Synod means assembly or meetings of Lutheran communities. The Rio-Grandense Synod was founded on May 20, 1886, and today is subdivided into nine smaller synods; the Synodal school belongs to the Vale do Rio dos Sinos Synod. See Renner; Kohl; Kuner, 2011.

11. Song "Mulheres de Atenas", by Chico Buarque de Holanda, 1976.
12. On teacher Lia Mostardeiro, read Almeida, 2013b.
13. Master's thesis, "As Marcas de Correção em Cadernos escolares do Colégio Farroupilha/RS - 1948/1958", 2011. Doctoral thesis, "O ensino primário no Colégio Farroupilha: do processo de nacionalização do ensino à LDB N 4.024/61 (Porto Alegre/RS: 1937/1961)", 2015, both supervised by Prof. Dr. Maria Helena Câmara Bastos, at PUCRS (the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul).
14. On teacher Lilian Sofia Saenger, read Grazziotin, 2015.
15. Stability that the teacher acquired of not being able to be dismissed from the institution through legislation because she was close to retiring.

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