Coexistence and encounters in the built environment: Practices and experiences of 'living together' in two diverse neighborhoods of Marseille

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ABSTRACT

This thesis considers the question of the influence of the built environment on practices and experiences of living together in diverse neighborhoods. As cities worldwide are becoming increasingly diverse, heated debates over integration of migrants, social mix and social cohesion can carry unchallenged normative discourses and perpetuate cultural hegemony. With the aim of informing egalitarian and inclusive narratives of living together, this research turns towards residents of diverse neighborhoods in order to develop a grounded understanding of the various modes of dealing with difference, as lived at the local scale. Building on academic contributions from multiple intersecting disciplines, this thesis argues that the mediating action of the built environment on encounters and coexistence has been mostly overlooked in literature. Through a case study from Marseille, France, it analyses the respective significance of 4 dimensions of the built environment, namely the physical, functional, spatial and symbolic dimensions, and their joint influence on social interactions occurring in public and semipublic spaces of the neighborhood. Finally, the research findings point to the importance of acknowledging and respecting the diverse yet equally valuable needs and preferences about socialization and mixing.

Keywords: built environment, coexistence, diversity, encounters, inclusion, living together, local scale, mixing, neighborhoods, public and semipublic spaces, social interactions

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À Mathilde et Constance

À Joannie

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All pictures in this paper were taken in the summer of 2017 by the author

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Marseille Old Port, with "L'Ombrière", designed by Norman Foster

In the context of high mobility of people worldwide and mass migration towards urban centers, cities are becoming increasingly diverse. New patterns of superdiversity now present major social and political challenges for urban settlements (Vertovec, 2007). I wish to contribute to ongoing debates around integration of migrants, social mix and social cohesion in cities by putting forward new narratives of living together.

Yet, the very use of the terms integration and social cohesion is problematic, as these can carry normative implications and perpetuate discourses of cultural hegemony. This is especially the case when assimilation is endorsed as the dominant narrative about managing diversity. In this context, assimilation refers to integration processes undergone by immigrants which, aiming at the reduction of differences between them and native-born majority populations, usually imply giving up languages, identities, cultural practices and loyalties (Bloemraad et al., 2008, p.162-63). However, Oosterlynck et al. (2016, p.772) argue that:

> "Whereas assimilation of newcomers and minorities in the dominant lead culture has been the classic nationalist strategy to forge national social cohesion (Brubaker, 2001), such a strategy no longer holds under the pressure of global connections and mobilities, particularly in superdiverse cities"

As the concept of social cohesion entails the production of a social order mainly based on shared norms and values (Forrest & Kearns, 2001, p.2128), it is difficult to adapt it to the realities of urban diversity. Its emphasis on a 'common' civic culture fails to recognize difference and denies pluralism; thus, it is likely to result in the exclusion of people who do not fit in or adhere to this 'common' project.

In this context, I would rather advocate for inclusive and egalitarian narratives of living together, based on acknowledgement and respect of each other's particularities, and intercultural collaboration.

With this in mind, I turn towards residents of diverse neighborhoods to learn about their practices and experiences of living together. There are plenty of policies, as well as abundant academic research, that focus on diversity-related problems adopting a macro, societal approach (see for example Vertovec (2007) on implications of diversity at the national scale, Fincher et al. (2014)

on multicultural planning at the city scale, etc.). For this research, I wish to look at the 'ordinary', the daily modes and mechanisms of living together, and the ways diversity is experienced at the small, local scale. By understanding those, this research might inform new narratives of living together in cities. Neal et al. (2013, p.315) illustrate and defend this idea:

> "With an emphasis on lived experiences, contingent identifications and amicable interactions, everyday multiculture approaches disrupt the segregation narratives by repositioning debates about cultural difference away from panic, crisis, conflict and apartness, suggesting instead the need to focus on the making of competent multicultural populations"

Despite globalisation, digital technologies and the 'new mobilities' paradigm (Sheller & Urry, 2006), the neighborhood scale remains a relevant object of study. Multiple qualitative studies demonstrate that the neighborhood is of primary importance for certain social groups, such as poorer households and ethnic minorities (Van Kempen & Bolt, 2012, p.442-43). The environment of diverse neighborhoods thus appears as a perfect setting to investigate ways of dealing with diversity. When "difference has to be confronted almost on residents' doorsteps" (Jackson & Butler, 2015, p.2362), diversity takes a very concrete and spatialized dimension. In this context, the built environment is more than just a backdrop by which people live their lives (Butterworth, 2000), rather it influences, structures and circumscribes coexistence and interactions across lines of difference (Wise & Velayutham, 2014).

Multiple factors can mediate encounters with diversity occurring in neighborhood spaces and influence the effects they have on people (Schuermans, 2018). It goes, for example, from personal past experiences to norms of civility, discourses in the media, etc. Same goes for the construction of spatial meanings, territorial identities and sense of place, which can be influenced and mediated by personal trajectories and socioeconomic factors, but also collective memory. However, among those mediating factors, not much has been said about the influence of the characteristics of the built environment or the local urban landscape.

Hence, I would like to find out: How does the built environment influence and mediate practices and experiences of 'living together' in diverse neighborhoods?

To answer this research question, I have developed a theoretical framework based on contributions of various authors from the intersecting fields of social geography, urban sociology, and urban design and planning theory.

In the first section of the thesis, I will present a brief review of the literature on geographies of encounter, touching on academic debates about coexistence in contexts of diversity, social mix and segregation. I will then continue with a brief literature review about the role of the built environment on social behavior and interactions. This will allow me to situate my research, which is at the intersection of those two building blocks. After explaining the aim of my research, I will present the conceptualisation of my theoretical framework, as well as the definition of the four dimensions of the built environment I intend to look at, namely the physical, functional, spatial and symbolic dimensions. In the second section, I will present the methodology of my research, which can be summarized as inductive research using qualitative methods, namely semi-structured interviews and ethnography. The third section will provide a description of the case study used for the empirical research: the diverse neighborhoods of Belsunce and Noailles, located in the city center of Marseille (France). The fourth section will present an analysis of the results, first, by looking at general patterns of coexistence and encounter in the neighborhood spaces, and second, by focusing on three key places of encounter: a paseo/promenade, an outdoor market and a public library. The final section will present a discussion of the findings and a conclusion.

Marseille Old Port

LITERATURE REVIEW & THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Coexistence and encounters

My research is situated within wider academic debates on socio-spatial segregation and social mix in cities. More precisely, I am interested in debates about coexistence in contexts of diversity and the effects of encounters with difference.

This debate arose from the 'contact hypothesis', a theory from the field of social psychology, elaborated in Allport's "The nature of prejudice" (1954). It suggests that regular contact across lines of difference occurring in shared spaces can bring people to reconsider prevailing meanings and discomforts around difference, reduce prejudice, increase empathy and "pave the way for progressive alliances" (Lawson & Elwood, 2014, in Schuermans, 2018, p.3).

The notion of encounter is central in this debate, as the term refers to social interactions involving difference. In fact, most of the debate revolves around the effects of encounters on people and the meanings derived or constructed from them, as "encounters are not only about the coming together of different bodies but are about meetings that make (a) difference" (Wilson, 2016, p.14).

Those encounters can happen in different types of spaces, namely public spaces (streets, squares, parks, markets, public transports, etc.), semipublic or parochial spaces (schools, community centers, places of worship, work places, etc.), and private spaces (dwellings, backyards). (Schuermans, 2018, p.11)

Also, encounters can be divided in two categories. Unfocused interactions are "characterized by fleeting exchanges and short-lived encounters between people who remain strangers". Focused interactions refer to "more communal relationships between neighbors, colleagues or acquaintances who do not remain, or have never been, strangers". (Goffman, 1963, p.24, in Schuermans, 2018, p.3,5)

Figure 1 presents a summary of the geographies of encounter literature, which studies the dynamics of social interactions occurring in various shared spaces, mainly from the angle of urban and social geography. In the next pages, I will give detailed explanations on certain parts of this table, as they are important for my research. I will later use the conceptualisation offered by this table to situate my own research within the wider debate.
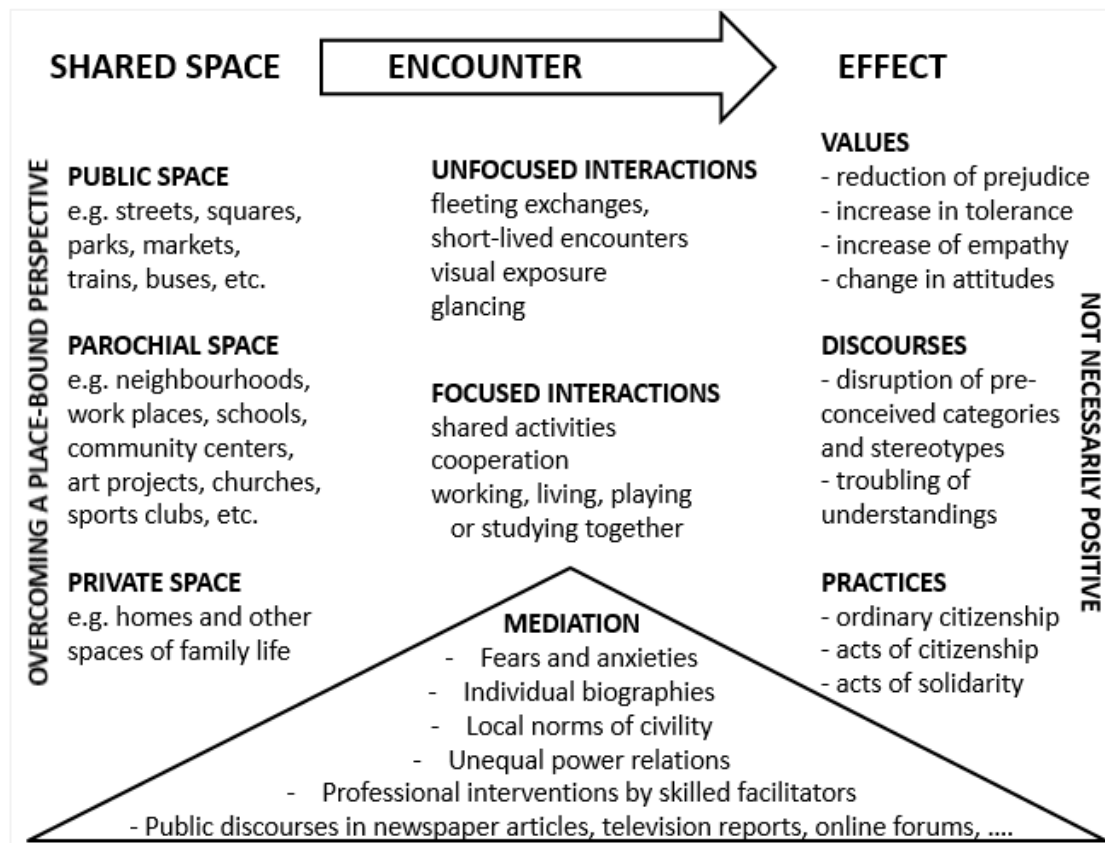
Figure 1: Summary of the geographies of encounter literature, as conceptualised by Schuermans (2018, p.11)

There are two main trends of thought in this academic debate. On the one hand, authors go along quite positively with Allport's contact hypothesis and apply it to unfocused interactions happening in public and semipublic spaces. On the other hand, authors are more skeptical about Allport's theory.

In the first category, authors have used qualitative research methods to study various neighborhood spaces, and have observed that everyday encounters between people at the local scale (even banal) can have the effect of improving acceptance and sympathy for difference.

Following a study of diverse neighborhoods in Montreal, Canada, Germain (2000, 2002, 2016) explains how superficial but regular contacts of people through public life and in public space can lead to accommodation or acclimatisation to difference. As an effect of unfocused interactions, people can develop a 'peaceful but distant coexistence' in diverse neighborhoods, which are felt as being inclusive environments.

Blokland and Nast's (2014) research in Berlin shows that everyday unfocused interactions through local daily routines contribute in the development of 'public familiarity' and the creation of a 'comfort zone' in public spaces of diverse neighborhoods. Further, understanding the local social environment through passive contact might ease sense of belonging; and living in a diverse neighborhood might even have the effect of improving people's general skills of socialization.

In her study of public spaces in a diverse London neighborhood, Wessendorf (2014) explains people tend to demonstrate civility towards diversity and keep a polite distance, as a strategy to avoid tensions and conflict. 'Commonplace diversity' translates as a resulting superficial acceptance of people who are different, and a sense that, as long as people interact and are friendly, things are fine. Also, there's a "balance between engaging with diversity and keeping positive relations by way of avoiding contact" (idem, p.400), illustrated by the attitude of 'being open, but sometimes closed'. Conviviality during unfocused interactions, mild indifference and light engagement might then represent an effective mode of dealing with diversity.

Finally, Peterson's (2016) research on public libraries in Rotterdam shows that unfocused interactions, like fleeting encounters and simple co-presence, result in familiarity with diversity, which can play a key role in creating a sense of community without the need for actual social contact (or focused interactions). She points to the varying yet equally important forms of social relations and local attachments, which together describe the 'collective life'.

In the second category of the debate, authors argue that population groups lead parallel lives, and only focused interactions and meaningful encounters across lines of difference can have the effect of changing perceptions and attitudes towards the 'other' (see Figure 1).

Valentine (2008) argues people are normally courteous with others in public space due to normative codes of behavior, such as politeness and appropriateness. The convivial quality of those everyday unfocused interactions might reflect a culture of tolerance, but this is not the same as having respect for difference (idem, p.334). Her research in three UK locations shows there might be a paradoxical gap between practices and deeper-held values or prejudice (idem, p.323). Only meaningful encounters (through focused interactions) can result in a change of values, and translate beyond the time and space of the contact itself into a lasting, more general positive respect for difference (idem, p.325).

Matejskova and Leitner (2011) highlight that encounters with difference are potentially open: they can have both positive or negative outcomes. Their study of immigrant integration projects in Berlin demonstrates that superficial encounters in public and semipublic spaces can actually have the effect of reinforcing habits, stereotypes and prejudice (idem, p.735). On the other hand, sustained and close encounters between people of different backgrounds on a regular basis (focused interactions), such as working together, engaging in shared activities and assuming joint responsibility in projects of common interest, can engender empathy and positive attitudes towards others and counter prejudice.

Some authors specifically address the question of whether different communities lead parallel lives in the neighborhood, and study how this mode of coexistence might be spatially articulated.

According to Van Kempen and Bolt (2012), living together in diverse neighborhoods, and physical co-presence in shared spaces, does not necessarily lead to intensive contacts between different social groups. In fact, those hardly exist and are difficult to generate. Due to differences in lifestyles, activity patterns, orientations, values and norms, or simple lack of interest, people live rather parallel lives.

The 'social tectonics' metaphor designates situations in mixed neighborhoods when "groups move past each other like tectonic plates below the Earth's crust, with little contact" (Jackson & Butler, 2015, p.2350). However, research in two mixed neighborhoods of London showed that reality is more complex, nuanced and sometimes even contradictory (idem, p.2363). Despite discourses of openness towards diversity, people might not wish to mix through any kind of social interactions and in any type of spaces (idem, p.2362). Most often, the degree of acceptance and engagement with others depends on the context or the issues at stake (idem, p.2363).

Social relations between different groups (both focused and unfocused) are influenced by people's level of involvement in their neighborhood, their sense of identification with place and their sense of social obligation (ibid). The degree of physical proximity to different groups, as well as proximity to nodes of diversity or important public places of encounter in the neighborhood, also represent important influential factors (ibid). Those points refer to different mediation factors affecting social interactions. Those could be added to Figure 1, in the triangle at the bottom of the diagram.

Hoekstra and Pinkster's (2017) ethnographic study of a community center in Amsterdam illustrates that encounters in diverse neighborhoods' semipublic spaces might not necessarily be experienced as positive. Those spaces can become sites of contestation and exclusion if there is discord between different groups over the use of space (idem, p.1). These spatialized social dynamics affect the potential of certain neighborhood spaces to function as positive spaces of encounter (idem, p.17).

According to Jackson and Benson's (2014) research in London, residents of mixed neighborhoods can create and maintain socio-spatial and symbolic boundaries between themselves and other social groups. Processes of disaffiliation from others can be seen as an attempt to create a stable sense of identity within a diverse and changing world.

In her mixed-methods study of a neighborhood in Boston, USA, Tach (2014) explains diverse neighborhoods might in fact be "socially and organizationally differentiated through patterns of microsegregation, or homogenous pockets of interaction and organization within the larger neighborhood" (idem, p.13). Although people share the same neighborhood space and despite their physical proximity, both focused and unfocused interactions across lines of difference remain modest (idem, p.15). The spatial differentiation of social groups can happen on a very small geographical scale of a street or a block (idem, p.29). In a way, this segmentation helps to "produce social order and shared expectations" within the neighborhood (idem, p.16). "Residents are aware of this spatial differentiation, and they reinforce it in their daily routines via the places they frequent and the places they avoid" (idem, p.38). The neighborhood's diversity can provide a broad set of amenities to residents; however, access does not translate into equal use (idem, p.15). Few places appear to attract a diverse clientele. The specialized nature of certain places, combined with people's daily routines and choices about how to use space, contribute in minimizing contact across difference (idem, p.34).

In any case, while social mixing remains a complicated question, its underlying assumption that segregation of minorities necessarily leads to negative effects is being thoroughly contested in the literature (Fincher et al., 2014, p.23). Van Kempen and Bolt (2012), among many others, explain that spatial concentration of an ethnic group in an area has many advantages. It can serve as an arrival place for newly arrived immigrants of the same group. Also, physical proximity of like-minded people facilitates the development of social contacts between them. It can provide a base for networks of support and reduce people's feeling of isolation. Ethnic clustering also helps to preserve the culture, ethnic identity, habits and cultural references, thus making people

feel safe and at home. Finally, it creates a critical mass for commercial services and shops, as well as non-commercial institutions and organizations, while encouraging ethnic entrepreneurship (idem, p.451-52).

In conclusion of this brief literature review on encounters and living with difference, I emphasize that social interactions are complex and very diverse themselves. Wilson (2016) rightfully points out that it is difficult to establish evidence between encounters and subjectivity, and even more so to attribute meaning(s) to those encounters. The concept of 'meaningful encounter' itself is problematic since "to identify something as meaningful is to simultaneously create value" (idem, p.10), thus marginalizing a plurality of other perspectives (idem, p.11). Encounters are valued in different ways by different people, and the potentials of the moment are also experienced in varying ways (ibid). As events of relation, encounters are, by nature, ambiguous and unpredictable (idem, p.14-15). In that sense, who can judge the value of encounters?

> "When particular outcomes are desired or are of interest, whether the reduction of prejudice, the production of social cohesion or the development of empathy, encounters that do not contribute to these projects, or perhaps even work against them, are rendered inconsequential or even meaning*less*. This risks overlooking the different ways in which encounters come to matter, equates meaning with positive experience and posits only those encounters that have 'lasting effects' as meaning*ful*" (idem, p.11)

Accordingly, "fleeting encounters have been dismissed as having little meaning or little ability to transform values and beliefs" (idem, p.13). However, the actual repetition and accumulation of unfocused interactions over time can gradually shift perceptions, relations and behaviors (ibid).

Reflecting this common downplaying of the effects of fleeting encounters mentioned by Wilson (2016), many benefits of unfocused interactions described in the first section of the present literature review do not appear in Figure 1. Peaceful but distant coexistence, public familiarity, conviviality, etc. could be added in the third column of the diagram, in order to represent more fully the plural modes of dealing with diversity.

By choosing to center my research on unfocused interactions happening in public and semipublic spaces, I'm taking a stance in defending the value of those encounters and the concept of conviviality in everyday multiculturalism; while keeping in mind learnings from all sides of the debate.

Yet, my focus is not so much on the effects of encounter with difference themselves, but rather on mediation processes that might influence or shape coexistence in the neighborhood. This brief literature review shows that there is no consensus about the effects of encounters, how to reach those outcomes and even which outcomes are sought after in the first place.

There seems to be a consensus, though, about the need to pay attention to the mediating factors or mediation processes that come into play, in order to properly understand the dynamics of encounters (Schuermans, 2018, p.9), as illustrated in the triangle of Figure 1. Underlying conditions and regulations, structural frameworks and the wider contexts within which encounters take place do shape them in various ways (Matejskova & Leitner, 2011, p.736). Put differently, instead of trying to treat a symptom (i.e. prejudice, rejection, exclusion, etc.), attention should be given to trying to understand the basis of the situation and the conditions shaping its existence.

The core hypothesis of the present research is that the built environment is part of those mediating factors of encounters, and has an impact on people's practices and experiences of living together in diverse neighborhoods.

As a setting and a backdrop to people's lives, spaces, places and buildings are often taken for granted and "may even become an invisible context" (Butterworth, 2000, p.2-3). This neglect of the role of the built environment seems to be applicable both to daily life and to academia. In their literature review of 24 ethnographic research articles about the use of public space in contexts of urban diversity, Rishbeth et al. (2018, p.42) point:

> "It is notable that none of these papers are specifically focused on the design of public space. Only 3 authors included photographs of the places under discussion, indicating a general disinterest or lack of prioritisation with regard to the visual character or spatial qualities of the urban landscape"

Whereas the built environment has been mostly overlooked within this strand of literature, I wish for my research to contribute in filling this gap.

The literature specifically interested in the relation between social interactions and the built environment in contexts of urban diversity is quite recent and not so abundant yet. For that reason, I will start this section by looking at broader literature on the effects of the built environment on social life.

As Lynch (1960) states in the opening of his book "The image of the city":

> "Nothing is experienced by itself, but always in relation to its surroundings" (idem, p.1)

The environment in which people live has an impact on many aspects of their life, among which their social interactions. Academic debates in environmental sociology oppose determinist and constructivist approaches to the relation between social behavior and the environment (Stedman, 2003). People evaluate, give meaning and relate to space or to the environment on the basis of their lived experiences. The space or environment in which they live can thus be seen as a social construction. But, "although social constructions are important, they hardly arise out of thin air: the local environment sets bounds and gives form to these constructions" (Stedman, 2003, p.671).

Physical characteristics of the environment do not determine or produce social behavior directly, but rather contribute to it in indirect ways, namely through the mediating action of meanings and experiences. First, physical features influence the meanings attributed to the environment, which are in turn associated with evaluations of the space. Elements of the environment thus underpin the meanings on which use of space is based (idem, p.674). Second, "experiences are linked to the environment in which they occur: the physical [environment], by virtue of certain characteristics, enable or constrain a range of experiences that shape meanings" (ibid). The meanings produced from these experiences in turn underpin social behaviors (idem, p.675).

Although this introductory passage is about the environment at large, including natural landscapes, it gives an interesting insight into the mediating processes at play. The focus is now turned towards the built environment and the urban context. When talking about the built environment, I agree with Butterworth's (2000, p.4) conception and scope of the term:

> "In addition to infrastructure, the built environment can include broad features of urban layout, such as cityscapes (building heights, shapes and overall density) and streetscapes (width, tree

cover, housing density, and the diversity of uses to which buildings are put). The built environment can also include a more particular analysis of the exterior qualities of individual buildings, and the architectural features of building interiors […] Whereas the notion of landscape traditionally referred to physical and human-altered environments, it now attempts to interpret human relationships with landscapes by considering sense of place, symbolism, meaning, lived experience, territoriality and expressions of power and social control"

Hence, the built environment is not only composed of physical dimensions (building heights, density, architecture, etc.), but also of functional dimensions (building uses), spatial dimensions (wider layouts and organizations) and symbolic dimensions (sense of place, meanings, lived experience, etc.).

Researchers in many disciplines have studied the built environment's influence on social interactions. "There is nothing particularly controversial about this assertion. That resident interaction is affected by spatial organization was advanced by Chicago School sociologists in the 1920s (Talen & Koschinsky, 2014, p.729). Up until this day, "mainstream urban design theory and practice are explicitly pro-social: the importance of socializing in outdoor public spaces is promoted and the benefits for well-being have been well documented" (Rishbeth et al., 2018, p.37).

Classics in urban studies include Jacobs' (1961) "The death and life of great American cities", in which she traces the relation between certain features of the urban fabric and quality of social life in inner-city neighborhoods of New York. Physical features such as balconies on facades, medium-height buildings and medium-size blocks, as well as functional features like the mix of uses within a neighborhood, would ensure a level of activity and street life at various times of the day, and put 'eyes on the street' (idem).

Another popular reference is Gehl's (1971) evocative "Life between buildings", in which he highlights that human-scale architecture and physical qualities of public space can encourage public life. Through his study of public spaces in various locations in Denmark, he argues that a built environment with physical features that present an invitation to stay outside is favorable to rich recreational and social activities. As he summarises it, we shape the built environment, but then, the built environment shapes us (idem).

More recently, researchers in public health have emphasised the role of the built environment on human wellbeing. Physical qualities such as pedestrian-

friendly spaces, restricted motor traffic and a degree of 'permeability' in the built environment (no hard frontier) encourage networking, neighborly behavior, enhanced awareness of, and concern for, others (Butterworth, 2000, p.14). Diversity of building design and land use promotes interaction with, psychological interest in and attachment to one's surroundings (idem, p.3). Symbolism of locally treasured architectural landmarks and shared emotional connection to place foster sense of community (idem, p.12). Also, humans are motivated to locate environments where curiosity will be stimulated, whilst at the same time affording a degree of certainty (idem, p.10). Similarly, people need a balance of both privacy and social interaction. Diversity of uses of public and semipublic spaces ensures that a variety of people from different backgrounds will be present at any one time in an urban space (idem, p.4). In sum, the built environment needs to be understood beyond its mere physical dimension.

The field of urban design and planning theory also studies the influence of the built environment on social activities, behavior and quality of life. Certain physical, functional and spatial features are said to have an impact on social inclusion, social cohesion, social sustainability and citizenship (Dempsey, 2008, p.251). High residential density and mixed land uses provide access to a range of services and facilities regularly required within walking distance. Accessibility and inclusiveness of space, translated as being pedestrian friendly, comfortable and welcoming for all residents, can directly influence a place's level of use (idem, p.258).

There is also an interplay of those features with more symbolic dimensions of the built environment. For example, well-connected pedestrian routes and small block sizes offer many route alternatives, which contribute to people's feelings of safety and ease while moving around the neighborhood (idem, p.255). Also, the built environment's visual form, its attractiveness and legibility, positively affects residents' satisfaction and feelings of attachment (idem, p.254). Finally, about the character of the neighborhood:

> "resulting from a mixture of built environment features and the social life supported, the perceived character [of a neighborhood] can therefore depend on users feeling safe and secure when moving around streets, perhaps as a result of unforced natural surveillance, helped by a mixture of land uses and housing types, thereby giving people a stronger right to roam on the street" (idem, p.256)

Discussing the perceived character of a neighborhood links to the symbolic dimension of the built environment, and concepts such as sense of place, place identity and place attachment. As Massey (1994) eloquently explained in "A global sense of place", places are not static objects, but rather processes that "can be conceptualized in terms of the social interactions which they tie together" (idem, p.8). As people can attribute different meanings to places and have different claims over the use of space, places thus become the products of multiple identities, histories and attachments (ibid). Also, the way people relate to certain places in the neighborhood affects how they perceive other users of that place and how they interact with them. In that sense, symbolic dimensions of the built environment act as mediators of encounters happening in the public and semipublic spaces of the neighborhood.

Similarly to the field of urban design and planning theory, the field of urban policy research also points that physical factors, along with the functional and spatial organization of the neighborhood, including density, land-use mix and proximity, affect social interactions. Compact, walkable and diverse (CWD) neighborhoods have many social benefits (Talen & Koschinsky, 2014). In addition to promoting health and safety, they have higher rates of social interaction and higher probability of sense of community and place attachment. Hence, environmental factors also link with some more symbolic dimensions of neighborhoods.

Interactions in the neighborhood are mostly a pedestrian phenomenon. The network of pedestrian streets has been shown to influence the networks of neighborly relations. Those are facilitated by good connectivity in urban space, accomplished by the presence of a high number of routes through an area (idem, p.730-731). This points to the role played by spatial dimensions of the built environment on dynamics of social life in the neighborhood. As for the functional dimension:

> "commercial streets can take the role of public space in terms of providing a venue for resident interaction. CWD neighborhoods are defined as having high levels of local services and facilities, and the use of these facilities (for shopping, worship or recreation) is linked to higher levels of resident interaction" (ibid)

Through a deeper focus on the concept of walkability, Leyden (2003) also asserts that neighborhoods' built environment affect social life and thus physical and mental health (idem, p.1550). His quantitative analysis of different locations in Ireland confirms that walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods contribute to enhanced levels of social and community engagement (idem,

p.1546). Thanks to their physical, functional and spatial features, these neighborhoods enable residents to perform various daily activities without the use of a car and have a variety of places within walking distance. In addition, pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use neighborhoods enhance social capital because they enable residents to interact, may those interactions be intentional or accidental. Summed over time, those contacts occurring in the local space breed a comforting sense of familiarity and predictability (ibid). In fact, the more places people are able to walk to in their neighborhood, the higher their level of social capital: residents walk more, feel more connected to (or part of) their community, are more likely to know their neighbors, to trust others, and to be engaged socially (idem, p.1548-49).

In their quantitative research of 10 neighborhoods in Portland, Oregon, Wilkerson et al. (2012) also adopt a more detailed focus: they note that specific physical features of the neighborhood, such as front porches and sidewalks, influence and mediate neighborly interactions by providing residents inviting physical opportunities to interact:

> "Neighborliness, including reciprocal relationships and trust of neighbors as well as neighborly knowledge and contacts, increases with the cumulative presence of physical-environment characteristics that provide semiprivate space for informal interaction, such as front porches and continuous sidewalks" (idem, p.605)

Finally, in the field of sustainable development research, there is also an interest in the relationship between the urban form or the built environment and the concept of social sustainability. Among contributory factors to urban social sustainability are many physical, functional and spatial ones: accessibility to local services and facilities, employment and green spaces; environmental quality and amenities; attractive public realm; walkable, pedestrian-friendly neighborhood; decent housing, etc. (Dempsey et al., 2011)

Authors specifically interested in the relation between social interactions and the built environment in contexts of urban diversity recently started to construct a new strand of literature in which many academic fields intersect, making it particularly interesting for my research.

Through their synthesis of 24 ethnographic research papers dealing with use of public space in diverse locations in the UK, Rishbeth et al. (2018) explain that the context and design of public spaces can shape potential for intercultural interactions to differing extents (idem, p.42). Qualities of public

urban spaces in the neighborhood such as their materiality and functionality can influence outdoor sociality in ethnically diverse contexts (ibid).

Markets provide easy and inclusive environments for encounter due to their open access, their dense physical environment and their focus on action giving legitimacy of purpose for hanging around (idem, p.44). Parks and spaces of shared leisure are less socially demanding environments, as they can bring together different communities and encourage mixing implicitly rather than explicitly (idem, p.45). Streets are "the epitome of fleeting [interactions] but with potential to be repeated […] Chances are increased when a location is busier, when there are established temporal patterns of use, where there are nodes (paths crossing or points of gathering) and where the atmosphere of the space is relaxed rather than stressed" (idem, p.45-46). Finally, although busyness is useful for spontaneous encounters and unfocused interactions, the presence of spaces of retreat and nearby quietness gives an invitation to extend the encounter and develop deeper sociability (idem, p.46,49).

More generally, intercultural social dynamics in outdoor public spaces are shaped by functional particularities of the urban context. Conviviality among strangers in public spaces is more common in places of purposeful doing where actions are simply understood, straightforward, undemanding and do not require extensive conversation (idem, p.48). Also, the physical design of public spaces itself can mediate unfocused encounters:

> "visual permeability, the design quality of openness of outdoor public environments, supports 'seeing and being seen' enabling mutuality of presence. Who passes by and what they are doing (fumbling for bus money, cheering up a child, carrying shopping) allows for a fundamental human to human emotional connection not reliant on conversation" (idem, p.46)

There is also a need to acknowledge that participation in outdoor public spaces may vary, as "the use of public space reflects the heterogeneity of society" (idem, p.48). The co-locations of a multiplicity and diversity of activities is favorable to accommodate the different forms of socializing (ibid); hence referring to the role played by functional dimensions of the built environment.

Regarding the interplay of functional and spatial dimensions, Fincher et al. (2014) point that social mixing and encounters across cultures occur in a wide variety of places and settings. People do not only interact in public spaces around their residence, but also in semipublic spaces and in other sites of the

city. Hence, the provision of universally accessible spaces and services such as public libraries, public transport, public schools and community centers plays a vital role in setting the conditions of everyday multiculturalism (idem, p.45).

Tersteeg and Pinkster (2016) point that, in diverse neighborhoods, despite social boundaries that might be drawn at the group level, there are positive interactions and everyday friendly encounters between residents of different groups at the individual scale (idem, p.773). However, their qualitative study of a mixed-tenure housing development in Amsterdam showed that, in situations of conflicts between groups, such everyday positive encounters seem unable to decrease social distances at the group level (ibid). Physical, functional and spatial place-specific features, such as housing design, as well as neighborhood facilities and amenities, can have the effects of intensifying social boundaries and emphasizing the different uses of these spaces among different groups. In that context, segregated routines in the neighborhood can be seen as symbolic of the social divisions within the neighborhood. Thus, the inclusiveness or exclusiveness of certain place-specific factors, which also relates to the symbolic dimension of the built environment, influences the dynamics of living with difference (idem, p.774).

Finally, Wise and Velayutham's (2014) comparative analysis of diverse neighborhoods in Sydney and Singapore illustrates how conviviality in everyday multiculturalism is produced by a set of practices of recognition and accommodation to diversity. Space and place (and the built environment) contribute to structure and circumscribe coexistence and interactions in the neighborhood. Concretely, layout and physical proximity in high-density housing conditions can create an interweaving of ethnically diverse practices, leading to an awareness of each other's lives through visual exposure. Negotiation and tension over use of shared spaces offer opportunities for accommodation and intercultural habituation. This points to the interplay of physical and spatial characteristics of the built environment in influencing modes of coexistence in diverse neighborhoods. Also, the cumulative and transformative capacity of habits and practices of 'everyday convivial multiculture' generates, over time, an 'intercultural habitus', in which living with and negotiating differences are assumed as natural. (idem)

The last four references cited here engage in the academic debate about the effects of encounters with difference, but they do so through the lens of the mediating action of the built environment. In that sense, they contribute to building a bridge between literature on coexistence and encounters in urban diversity, and literature on the effects of the built environment on social behavior. I wish to participate in building this bridge with the present research.

On a final note, I want to accentuate the importance of adopting a critical and nuanced approach to this topic. Some literature on the question has overly normative conceptions and arguments (which seems to be less the case in more recent literature): the good or bad qualities of the built environment, the prosocial or antisocial behavior, the emphasis on social cohesion, etc. As Peterson (2016) puts it, research on this question should take into account the diversity of attitudes towards mixing: not everyone wants to mingle with others, wants the same degree of contacts, wants to be part of a community, in the traditional sense of the term (idem, p.12). Moreover, academic research (and public discourse) should stop to demonise ethnic clustering and self-segregation, and recognise that White middle-class people, for example, also tend to self-segregate. Discourses about 'living together' can only be inclusive and egalitarian if they are reflexive about the fact that often, much of the burden of interaction is placed on minority groups (Fincher et al., 2014, p.22).

Conceptualisation of research

With this in mind, I ask: How does the built environment influence and mediate practices and experiences of living together in diverse neighborhoods?

Shared Space   Encounter   Effect/Result

Public space
and
Semipublic space

Unfocused interactions

Modes of coexistence
or
Practices and experiences
of living together

Mediation

The local built environment
(4 dimensions)
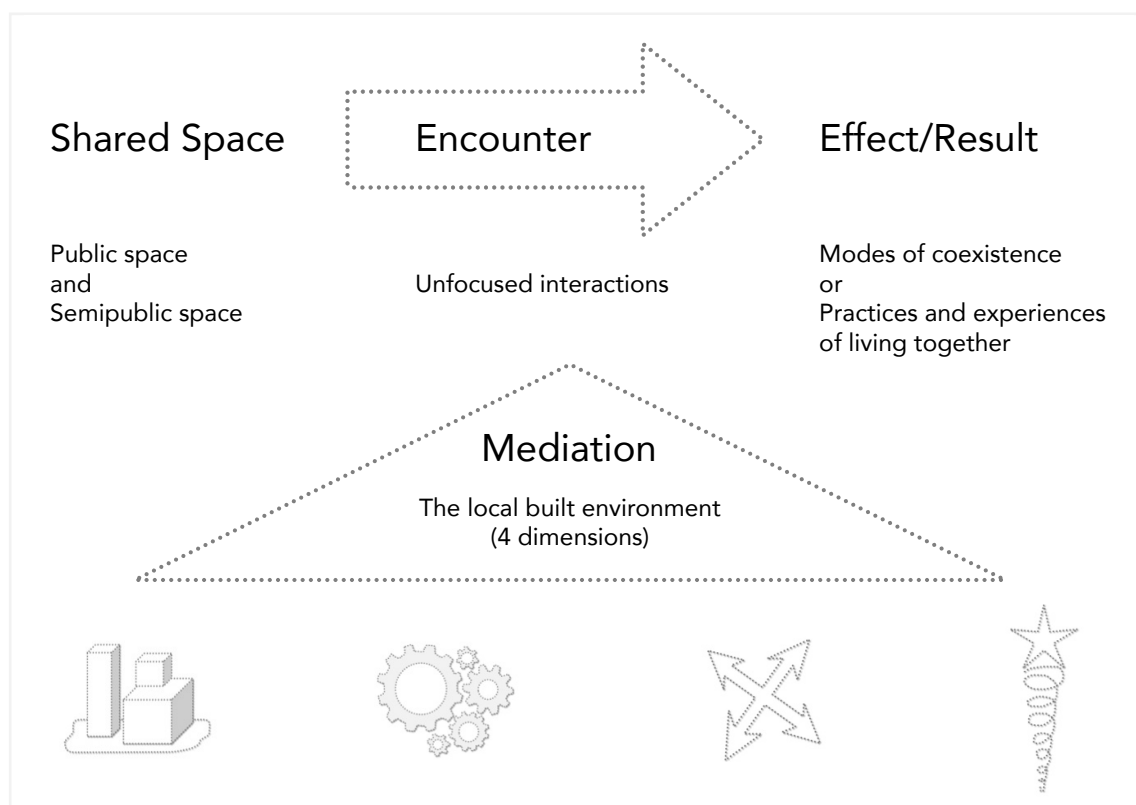
Figure 2: Conceptualisation of my research question, adapted from Schuermans (2018)

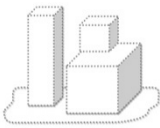Figure 2 presents a conceptualisation of my research and summarizes the building blocks of my theoretical framework. Adapted from Figure 1, it highlights the elements on which I focus my attention in order to answer my research question. As for the built environment, I decided to divide it into four dimensions, based on my summary of the literature: physical, functional, spatial and symbolic. Those four elements often come back in the literature, but different authors use a variety of terms to refer to them depending on the context. I chose those four categories because they are straightforward and they allow a thorough understanding of the built environment. The following table offers a definition of the four dimensions and organises the various elements susceptible to have an influence on practices and experiences of living together. This tool should help to figure out the respective significance of those different dimensions, as well as their interplay.

Physical		- density, size, height, age and typology of buildings - size, width and pattern of streets and sidewalks
Functional		- presence (or not) of a mix of uses or functions to meet the needs of the diverse population (shops, schools, health care facilities, community centers, places of worship, etc.) - presence (or not) of public infrastructures in the neighborhood (from parks, squares, libraries and sports facilities, to street lighting and urban furniture)
Spatial		- proximity between different uses or functions, relative location to one another - level of accessibility, walkability
Symbolic		- meanings associated with places or buildings - sense of place, place identity, place history, place attachment - perceptions of spaces (inclusiveness/exclusiveness, safety, etc.)

Through this theoretical framework, I will try to understand the mediating role of the built environment (and its 4 dimensions) on coexistence and encounters in diverse neighborhoods. Sub-questions to guide my research include:

How do different communities live together in the neighborhood? Do they mix or do they live side by side, in parallel to each other? Is it different from one generation to another? What do people think about living in a diverse neighborhood and what does it entail for their daily life?

Where (and when) do people from different communities meet and mingle? What are important public and semipublic spaces of encounter in the neighborhood?

How important are unfocused interactions happening in local public and semipublic spaces for dealing with diversity? More precisely, how important are processes of acclimatisation and familiarisation to difference through fleeting encounters and visual exposure? Where (and in what conditions) do those take place?

Finally, what is the respective role of the 4 dimensions of the built environment on practices and experiences of living together? How can that role be explained? How does that relate to processes of inclusion and exclusion? And what does that say about coexistence in cities?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Data collection

To answer my research question, I conducted empirical fieldwork using an inductive approach; meaning that I drew on empirical observations made in the context of a case study in order to find patterns, from which I could inform possible generalisations. This kind of bottom-up approach is the most appropriate way to deal with the present topic because my interests lie in people's practices and experiences, and not in policy makers' techniques and agendas. As Fincher et al. (2014, p.24) put it:

> "Instead of planner and design-centric approaches to promote social mixing and immigrant integration, we need to look at how local residents and social movements are already imagining and constructing [inclusive] neighborhood and community spaces of coexistence"[1]

Moreover, I adopted a very open and exploratory approach to the fieldwork, in order to develop a grounded understanding of the dynamics at play. As fieldwork was conducted quite early in the research process, empirical material actually helped me to choose which theoretical frameworks would be important. Finally, another advantage of inductive reasoning is that it can shed light on causality relationships.

For the fieldwork, I used qualitative research methods, namely semi-structured interviews, ethnography, as well as a qualitative examination of the local built environment. Qualitative research is more relevant for my topic than quantitative because it allows to explain processes (how), and not just describe facts (what, where, when). It can gather information on (and show) the rich variety of practices and experiences, and give the "chance to hear from disparate voices about the dynamics and effects of being in public" (Rishbeth et al., 2018, p.47). Qualitative evaluations of a phenomenon can lead to developing an in-depth knowledge, which is greatly needed to address the complex and multifaceted question of living together in urban diversity. As Rishbeth et al. (idem, p.36) explain:

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[1] I take this opportunity to point that when the terms 'mixing' or 'social mixing' are used throughout this thesis, they do not refer to housing policies of social mixing, but rather to the wider mixing and interactions occurring between different social groups in cities.

"findings from ethnographic research can provide resources that improve cultural literacy and support social justice, while informing a nuanced understanding of sociality, relevant for an increasingly diverse society"

The object of my empirical research is a case study composed of two adjacent neighborhoods in Marseille (France), and named Belsunce and Noailles. During the fieldwork, I did a qualitative examination of the local built environment, in order to get a portrait of physical, functional and spatial characteristics of Belsunce and Noailles. This was done by taking several hundred photographs (and a few videos) of streetscapes and buildings, as well as by reporting observations and thoughts in a journal (field notes). I walked extensively and repeatedly throughout the neighborhood[2], exploring all corners, varying my trajectories. Adopting a view 'from below', at pedestrian level, allowed me not only to observe but also to experience the built environment's features. Finally, I also visited other areas of the city, in order to get a broader picture of Marseille and to see how Belsunce and Noailles relate to the rest of the city.

Using a similar approach, I also conducted ethnographical research of social life in the neighborhood. I reported observations of people's behavior and use of space in my journal; and I paid attention to the 'ordinary', the 'small' and the 'every day'. Also, I had numerous informal conversations (unrecorded) and small chats with residents, shopkeepers and users about the neighborhood and about diversity. I also reported the information from those exchanges in my journal.

But the core of my empirical data consists of 18 semi-structured interviews, of an average length of one hour each, conducted in a face-to-face manner, with a total of 21 respondents. Most of the interviews took place in the respondents' residence or workplace. I have audio recordings for 12 of the interviews[3], as well as extensive written notes for all of them. All recordings were made under consent and all respondents were informed of the context and purpose of my research.

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[2] I take this opportunity to point that, in the parts of this thesis dealing with my empirical material, when the term 'neighborhood' is used in the singular form, it normally refers to the case study of Belsunce and Noailles as a whole. When a sentence or paragraph deals specifically with one of the
two neighborhoods under study, the text will say so explicitly.

[3] Six interviews weren't recorded, not because I didn't receive permission to tape them, but rather because I felt it was not appropriate to ask, because of the context or the attitude of the respondent. In those situations, I preferred having an unrecorded interview to having no interview at all.

I interviewed neighborhood residents, members of local associations and shop keepers. Respondents were from both Belsunce and Noailles, both women and men, and of varied ages. Also, they were from different social strata, with different education levels and backgrounds, and of different ethnic origins. My goal was to have the most diverse 'sample' possible. One informant put me in contact with 6 of the respondents, but I found most others by myself, knocking on doors and so on. Respondents' names appearing in the thesis are fictive names (which I chose), that try to respect or represent the cultural, ethnic or generational origin of the real name. The table on the following page presents the detailed list of interviews.

During the interviews, I used an interview guide, divided in two sections: questions about the neighborhood, and questions about diversity and coexistence. All interviews were done in French, which is my first language, as well as the first language of most respondents (or the second, for some). Appendix 2 presents the original French version of the interview guide, whereas Appendix 3 contains an English version for non-francophone readers of this thesis. Interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner, with a few open questions and a relaxed atmosphere. I asked more or fewer questions, or adapted the questions, depending on respondents and situations. I did not use all questions of the interview guide evenly throughout the 18 interviews. Respondents' answers applied to Belsunce or to Noailles, and certain applied to both. I had maps as material visual support, but they were seldom used by respondents during the interviews.

This fieldwork was done over the course of 28 consecutive days, in the summer of 2017. For this purpose, I found an accommodation in the heart of Noailles, including a great view on a busy street corner. Hence, my fieldwork in general, and the ethnographic aspect in particular, had a strong immersive dimension. The result was a fruitful and positive experience for me.

At some point during my stay in Marseille, it felt natural and logical to get involved in the local community. By doing so, it enriched my already intense experience. I did some hours of volunteering in two charity associations, I gave a helping hand in two theaters, and I helped a film crew for a movie shooting. It was also a way of saying thank you to the people who accepted to be interviewed for my project. I had the privilege to meet really interesting people, I made friends and lots of contacts. In sum, it was a 'charged' month, both intellectually and emotionally.

Name (fictive)	Sex	Ethnic background	Approx. age	Neighborhood of residence or work	Occupation/description	Context of interview	Length of recording
M. Amazit	M	Algerian	65	Belsunce	Business owner, is involved in local politics and associations	Individual, in his workplace	n/a
Tsun-ting	M	Chinese	25	Belsunce	Resident, works in a local center for youth	Individual, in his workplace	n/a
Mss Berger & Oziol	FF	French-Algerian	60 & 65	Belsunce	Residents, are involved in local association	Group, at home	3h20m
M. Bouhadjar	M	Algerian	65	Belsunce	Shopkeeper (main employee) and resident	Individual, in his workplace	n/a
Abderrahman	M	Comorian	45	Noailles	Muslim chaplain, director of a local association	Individual, in his workplace	42m
M. Shan	M	Chinese	40	Belsunce	Shopkeeper (owner)	Individual, in his workplace	n/a
M. Zainoun	M	Lebanese	55	Noailles	Shopkeeper (owner)	Individual, in his workplace	n/a
Jacques	M	French	55	Belsunce	Director of a local association	Group, on a restaurant terrace	n/a
Hakim & Viviane	MF	M: Comorian F: French	M:30 F:50	Belsunce	Residents, work in a local association	Group, in their workplace	42m
Ms Soukeyna	F	Senegalese	35	Noailles	Shopkeeper (main employee) and resident	Individual, in her workplace	50m
Amina	F	Moroccan	60	Belsunce	Resident, director of local association	Individual, in her workplace	1h58m
Laurie	F	French	30	Belsunce	Works in a local community center	Individual, in her workplace	1h
Mai-Anh (May)	F	French-Chinese	25	Belsunce	Resident, is involved in local association	Individual, at home	1h45m
Luc	M	Caribbean	50	Noailles	Resident	Individual, in a shop	32m
Rosa & Adrien	FM	F: Corsican M: Tunisian	F:60 M:65	Noailles	Residents, M is involved in local association	Group, at home	1h06m
Pierre	M	French	65	Belsunce	Resident, is involved in local association	Individual, on a restaurant terrace	40m
Fabien	M	French	35	Noailles	Resident	Individual, at home	1h12m
Sophie	F	French	35	Noailles	Resident, is involved in local association	Individual, at home	1h35m

On that note, I need to reflect on my positionality as a researcher and its potential impacts on the research outcomes. I am a young, middle-class, highly educated, Canadian white woman. I am an optimist, humanist and sociable diversity lover. I have traveled to and lived in many different countries in Europe during the 4cities master program, allowing me to observe different contexts and develop a comparative approach to urban studies. For this thesis, I studied Marseille, in France, which is a city I had never been before and a country I do not know much. Finally, I am also a young urban planner with a professional experience working in multiethnic and disadvantaged neighborhoods of Montreal, Canada. How are those factors, attributes and past experiences susceptible to influence and mediate my fieldwork and my interpretations of the results?

First, during the interview process, my positionality might have influenced what people have (or have not) told me. For example, 1 or 2 respondents seemed to have a negative opinion of urban planners in general. Despite that, most respondents were very open and seemed to feel at ease during the interview. They discussed a lot and I was able to gather very rich data thanks to them. Also, I benefited from the typical camaraderie of French people towards Quebecers.

Second, during the analysis of the empirical material, my positionality might have influenced the interpretation process. As a trained urban planner, I might have a bias in my evaluation of the built environment and overplay its significance. In fact, that's precisely why I embarked in this research project: I wanted to get out of my professional and academic comfort zone and explore the perspectives of critical urban studies, human geography and sociology. Further, as a 'privileged' person, I might have a lighter, naïve view on observed phenomena. I try to be self-reflexive, though, while I study various implications of urban diversity, and keep a critical perspective about dynamics of inclusion and exclusion.

Data analysis

After the fieldwork, I did a complete transcription of the 12 audio recordings of the interviews. I also wrote a summary at the end of each transcript. For the 6 unrecorded interviews, I transcribed the handwritten notes taken during the interviews. Finally, I also transcribed the field notes from my research journal[4].

The process of summarizing the interview transcripts helped to distillate the information and identify recurring ideas or themes. I highlighted text directly in the transcripts, attributing codes and writing notes in the margin. Inspired by the grounded theory approach, the codes actually helped me to build the theoretical framework of the thesis. I did not use a special transcription or coding software; only Microsoft Word.

I then compiled all the interesting themes from the interviews and grouped them into larger topics. For each larger topic, I read across the interviews and put together all the passages from all the interviews that touched on this topic, as well as my relevant field notes. Afterwards, I organized the larger topics into smaller subsections. For each subsection, I analyzed how respondents talked about the 'subtopic', who said what, etc. I identified patterns, resemblances and differences. Finally, I chose the most interesting quotes for each subsection, sometimes requiring to go back to the original transcripts.

Loyal to the inductive approach, I let the empirical material guide me through the coding process and arrangement of the results. I tried as much as possible to respect and represent the diversity of discourses captured in the interviews. I later used the conceptual framework of the four dimensions of the built environment to structure my explanations. Finally, I organized results in two main sections, namely 1, an analysis of general patterns of coexistence and encounter in the neighborhood spaces, followed by 2, a focus on three key places of encounter: a paseo/promenade, an outdoor market and a public library.

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[4] Interview transcripts and summaries totalize 283 pages, plus an additional 7 pages of field notes. If the reader is interested in getting access to this data, they can contact me via email and I will gladly share an anonymized version of these documents.

Limitations

Before presenting the results of the empirical research, it is important to address some of the limitations of this thesis.

First, a technical limitation: the translation of quotes from French to English can be difficult. French words sometimes don't find a direct equivalent in English. Notable examples from the present case include the French word 'dépaysé(e)', which is a mix of disorientation, expatriation and homesickness, but also being out of one's comfort zone and feeling lost (depending on the context); or the French verb 'côtoyer', which translates as being in the presence of others, rubbing shoulders, having light social interactions.

Second, some population groups are underrepresented in my research. For example, people who for various reasons do not use public or semipublic spaces of the neighborhood could only be reached with the help of one of my informants. I wouldn't have met those people otherwise. Also, the perspective of homeless people is unrepresented in my study, as I did not conduct interviews with them, although they are very present in certain public spaces of Belsunce. Finally, I unfortunately didn't interview people with disabilities or reduced mobility, nor gather information about their experiences in the local urban space.

Third, I do not address the issue of maintenance and cleanliness, physical degradation and bad neighborhood image, even if those are easily noticeable features of Belsunce and Noailles. In previous phases of this research, I reflected more generally upon the right to proper maintenance and neighborhood image. In many cases, diverse neighborhoods house relatively poor populations, as well as marginalised groups and individuals. Those neighborhoods commonly have low quality housing and inadequate or underfinanced infrastructures. Their public spaces are often poorly maintained, vandalised, left in disrepair or abandoned by public authorities. In such contexts, could it be harder for residents to feel at ease and develop neighborhood attachment and pride? In addition, inhabitants of diverse neighborhoods commonly suffer from bad neighborhood image and 'postal code discrimination' which, along with other forms of discrimination (on the basis of skin color, religion, sexual orientation, etc.), can result in 'conjugated stigmatization' (Wacquant, 2008). Finally, population groups living in diverse neighborhoods typically have less political voice in society.

If the local built environment is neglected, in poor condition or presenting a bad image, does this have an impact on daily practices and experiences of living together? Many respondents complained about waste management and rats in the area around the outdoor market in Noailles; and a few respondents mentioned the neighborhood's bad image in the eyes of 'outsiders'. However, I couldn't draw enough empirical evidence on the relationship of those factors to social interactions taking place within the neighborhood. For this reason, I did not pursue this research orientation in the present thesis. For further research, considering the residents' complaints, it could be interesting to study the question of social mobilization and solidarity for a common cause in the context of diverse neighborhoods. Further investigation methods would probably be needed for doing so, such as interviews with local associations and city officials, as well as a media analysis.

Fourth, I do not address wider questions of poverty, vulnerabilisation, homelessness, prostitution and illegal commerce happening in the studied neighborhoods. Nor do I address the forthcoming gentrification that is not yet so apparent, but that some people fear (eventual pressure of displacement related to Marseille's urban renewal schemes); nor the slowly invading touristification of the neighborhoods (Airbnb). Belsunce and Noailles are not so diverse economically speaking. When gentrification's effects will start to be felt locally, the balance of coexistence might be lost and 'living with difference' might take another meaning. In this light, it is relevant to ask which line of difference in society is the most important to address: ethnicity or class? It could have been interesting to address economic and political aspects of living together in diverse neighborhoods. However, I refrained from doing so because this doesn't relate directly to the orientation of my research, both in terms of topic and methodology. It would have implied further investigation of policies, as well as the legal context; whereas the present research design has a specific focus on the role of the built environment, with an ethnographic, bottom-up approach.

Finally, this research has a transnational dimension, as I am a French-Canadian researcher studying a French case study. Also, my analysis is informed by literature coming from various countries, mostly located in Western and Northern Europe, as well as North America and Australia. A few articles only have case studies in Asian and African cities. Hence, apart from that, my research is not so ethnically diverse in theoretical terms. Gender-wise, there is a balance between women and men authors in my bibliography, as well as within my interviewees.

Selection of case study

In order to carry empirical research, I selected a case study formed of two small (but distinct) adjacent neighborhoods located in the center of Marseille (France), and named Belsunce and Noailles. I chose them because they house a great ethnic and cultural diversity, and have a mixed-use, inner-city location. Another criterion was to have a francophone case study; French being my mother tongue. This way, I could establish contact more easily with people, and reach more depth and wealth of information.

Even though Belsunce and Noailles aren't so diverse in economic terms, I still considered literature about all types of diversity in the theoretical chapter, including socioeconomic and class diversity, because this literature offers many relevant insights on the interplay between social interactions across differences and the surrounding environment.

In order to develop a thorough understanding of outdoor sociality, it could have been interesting to conduct the same research in another context and compare results. Indeed, focusing on one type of neighborhood (ethnically diverse; mixed-use, inner-city location) makes it hard to know the exact extent to which the built environment influences social interactions. Possible comparative cases could have included a non-diverse neighborhood, a neighborhood located in a peripheral, residential, car-dependent location, a neighborhood in a non-Mediterranean country (influence of climate on local culture), a neighborhood in a country without a colonial past (influence of history on migration flows). However, only one factor would need to be changed at a time, to be able to identify causality. Such a comparative analysis was not possible in the context of the present research, due to constraints of time and resources. I preferred to focus on a single case study, have more time to explore it in-depth and draw inner-case comparisons, when possible and relevant.

Marseille is located in Southern France, along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, in the region of Provence-Alpes-Côte-d'Azur (Figure 3). As the second largest city in the country after Paris, Marseille is part of a metropolitan area (Figure 4) of 1,8 million inhabitants (www.marseille-provence.fr, 2017). The city of Marseille itself is home to 858 120 people (Insee, census 2014) and is organized in 16 districts (Figure 5).

Figure 3: Regions of France (source: www.gouvernement.fr, 2016)

The population pyramid of Marseille is relatively young, with important shares of people within the working-age group (Figure 6). There are good proportions of children, however, the most important group is people aged 18-23 years old. The group aged 31-50 years old also has a strong presence in Marseille's population structure. Gender-wise, the population pyramid is characterized by a slight dominance of women.

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[5] For certain parts of this section, I draw on earlier work, namely: Gagnon-Boucher, P. & Günther, C. (2017) 'Demographic City Profiles and Comparative Analysis. Marseille, France and Brussels, Belgium' done for R. Bauer's class 'Demography of European Cities', 4cities.

Figure 4: Métropole Aix-Marseille-Provence
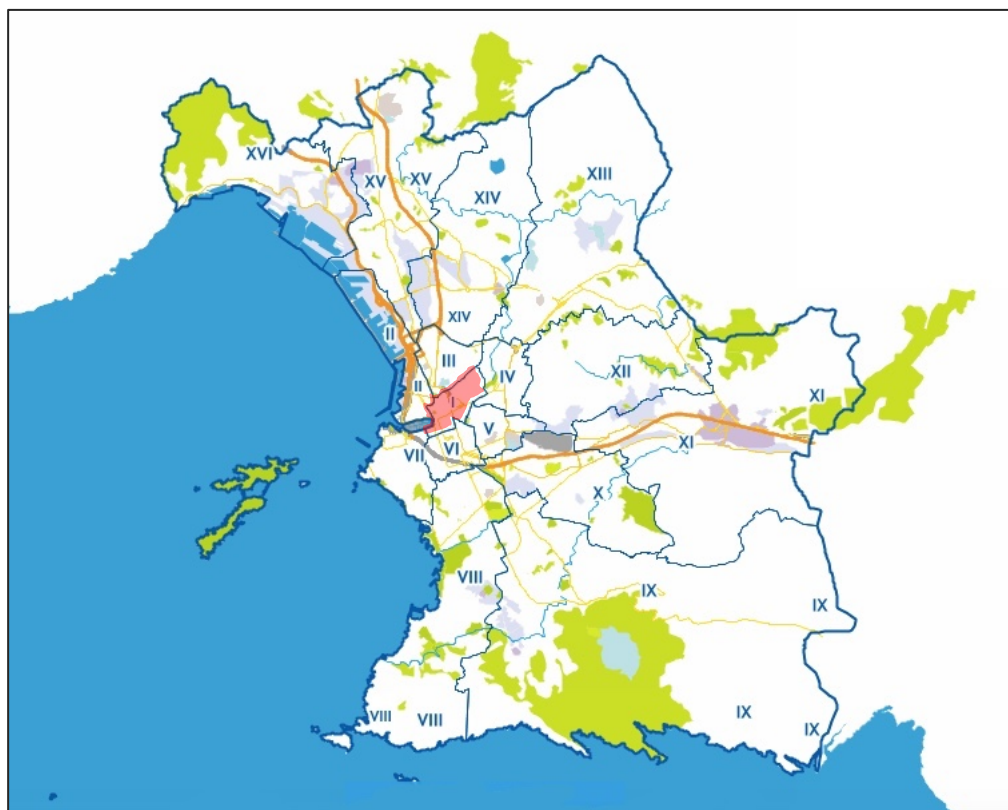*(source: www.marseille-provence.fr, 2017)*

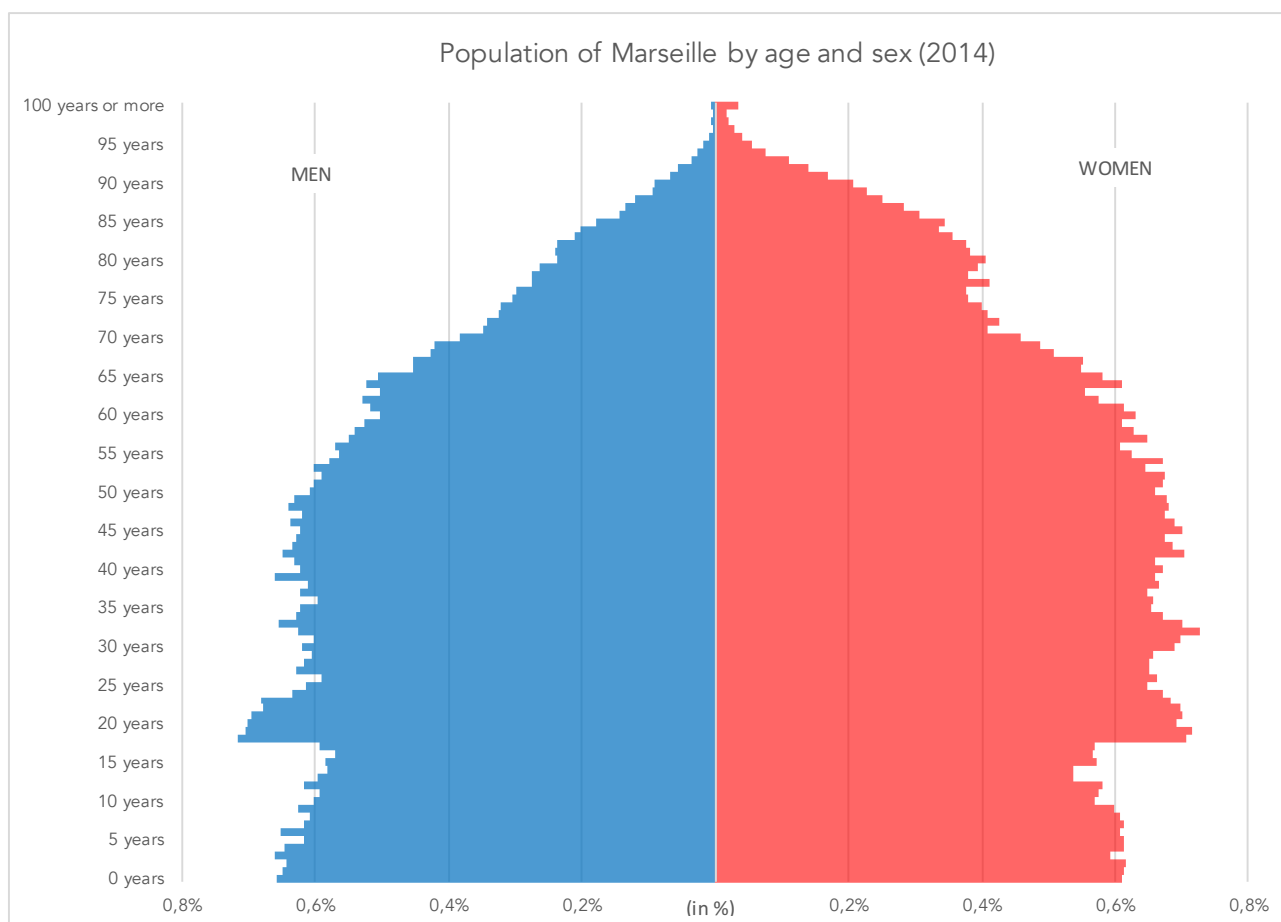*Figure 5: Marseille and its districts (source: carto.marseille.fr, 2017)*

Figure 6: Population of Marseille by age and sex, 2014
(source: Insee, census 2014; own graph)

The 1st district of Marseille is located at the very core of the city, by the Old Port. Along with neighboring areas, it forms the historical center of the city (Figure 7). The 1st district has 39 855 inhabitants on a territory of 1,8 km² (Insee, census 2014). It is divided into 6 neighborhoods, among which are Belsunce and Noailles (Figure 8). Belsunce has a population of 9 106 people on a territory of 38 ha (0,38 km²), whereas Noailles has a population of 4 863 people on a territory of 15 ha (0,15 km²) (Insee, census 2012).

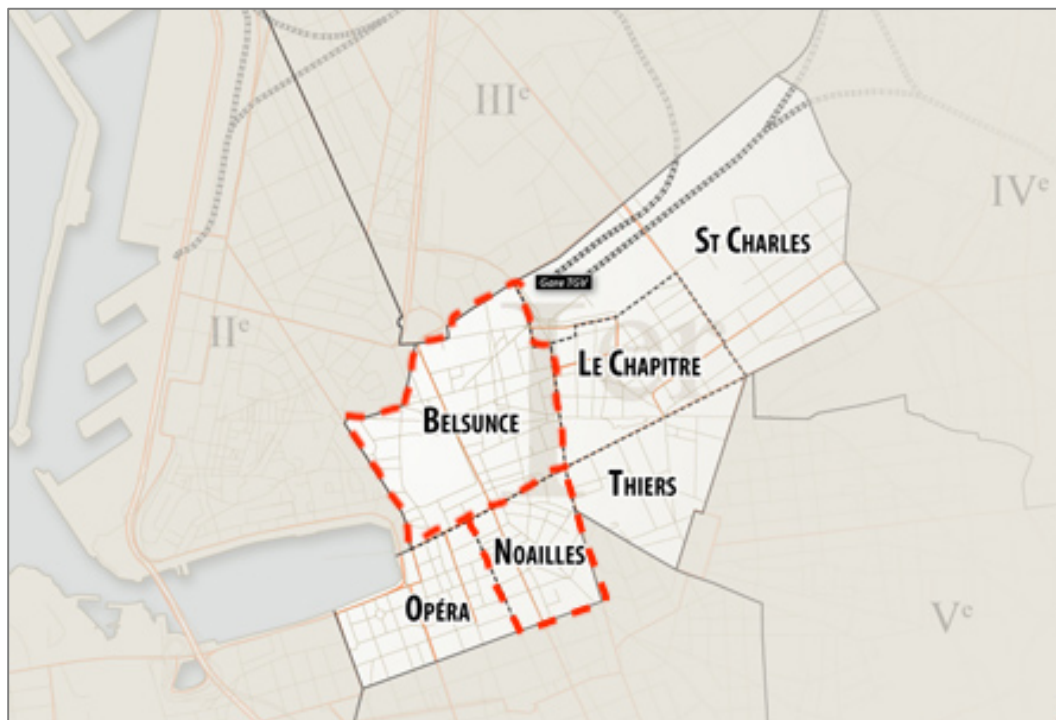*Figure 7: Marseille's 1st district (source: Google Earth, 2017)*

Figure 8: Location of Belsunce and Noailles within the 1st district
(source: www.agam.org, 2017)

Immigrants in Marseille

In Marseille, 13% of the population are immigrants (Insee, census 2012). An immigrant is a person born outside of France with a foreign nationality who resides in France (www.insee.fr, 2018). The share in Marseille is higher than the French average of 9%, but lower than the share of immigrants in the capital city, Paris (Figure 9). The immigrant population is unevenly distributed amongst Marseille's districts, with a concentration in the city center (districts 1, 2 & 3) and in the Northern periphery (districts 14 & 15). The share of immigrants in the 1st district (26%) is double that of Marseille's average. As for the neighborhoods under study, the immigrant population is much more important: they form 42% of Belsunce's population and 34% in the case of Noailles.

The most common origins of immigrants in Marseille are Algeria (35% of immigrants), Africa (other than Maghreb), Tunisia and Morocco (Figure 10). This can be explained by the proximity of those countries to Marseille, the history of French colonization in Africa, as well as labor immigration policies from the past (Témime, 1985).
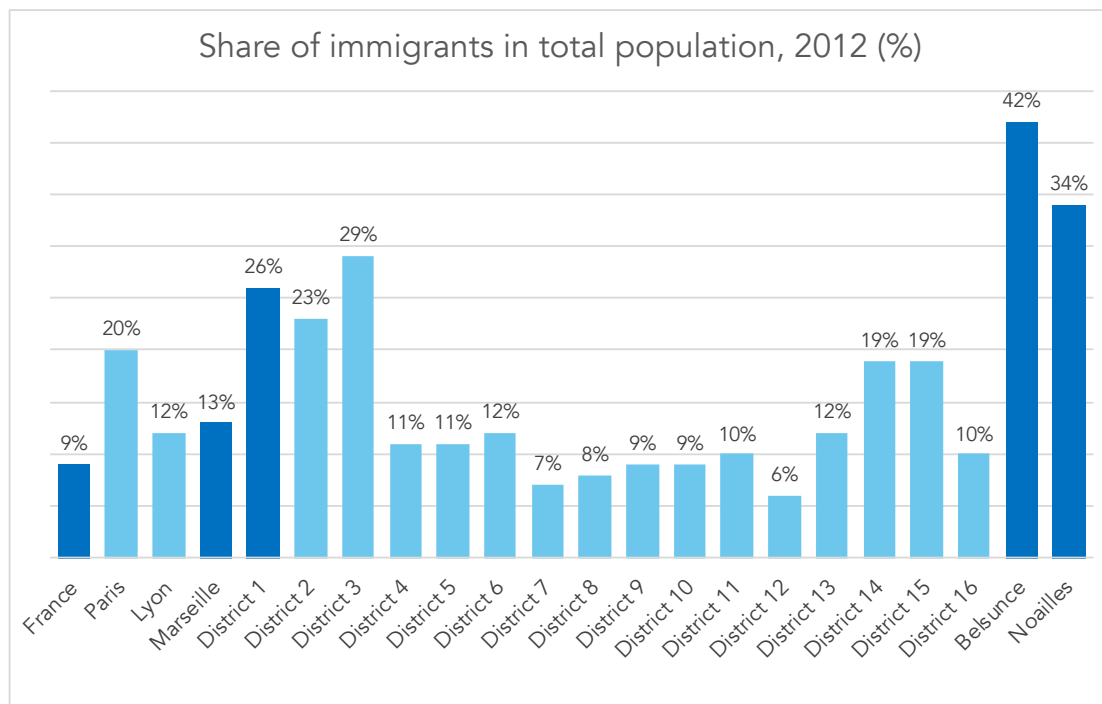

Figure 9: Share of immigrants in total population, 2012
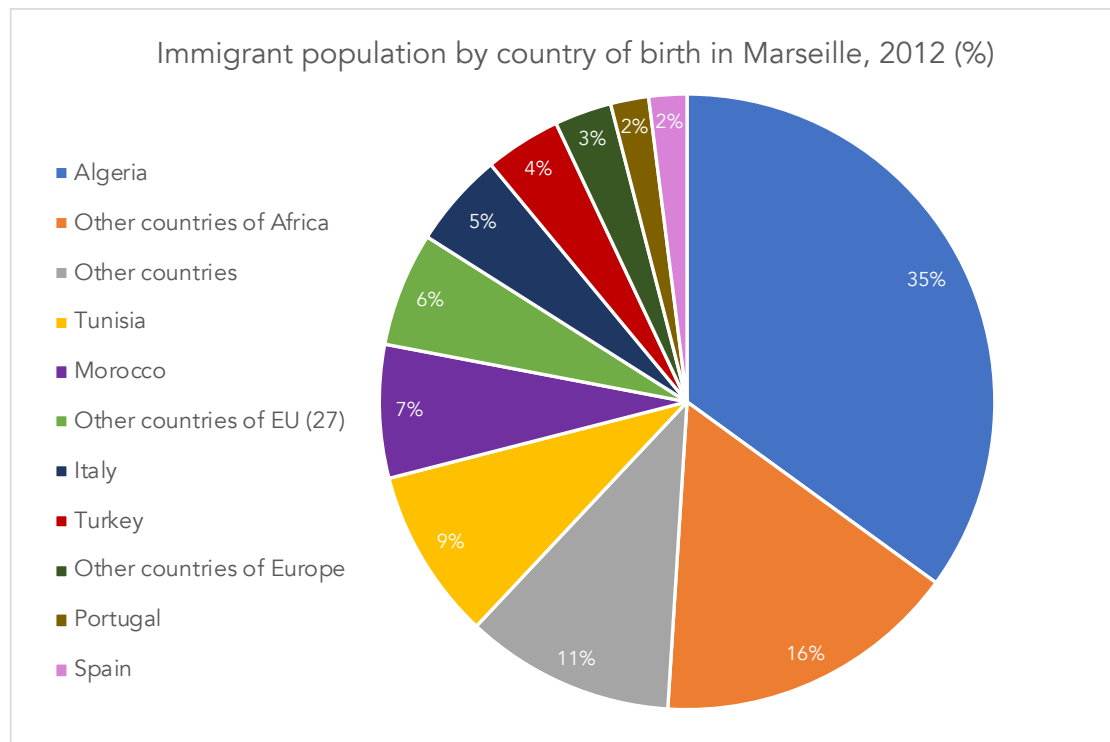*(source: Insee, census 2012; own graph)*

*Figure 10: Immigrants by country of birth in Marseille, 2012
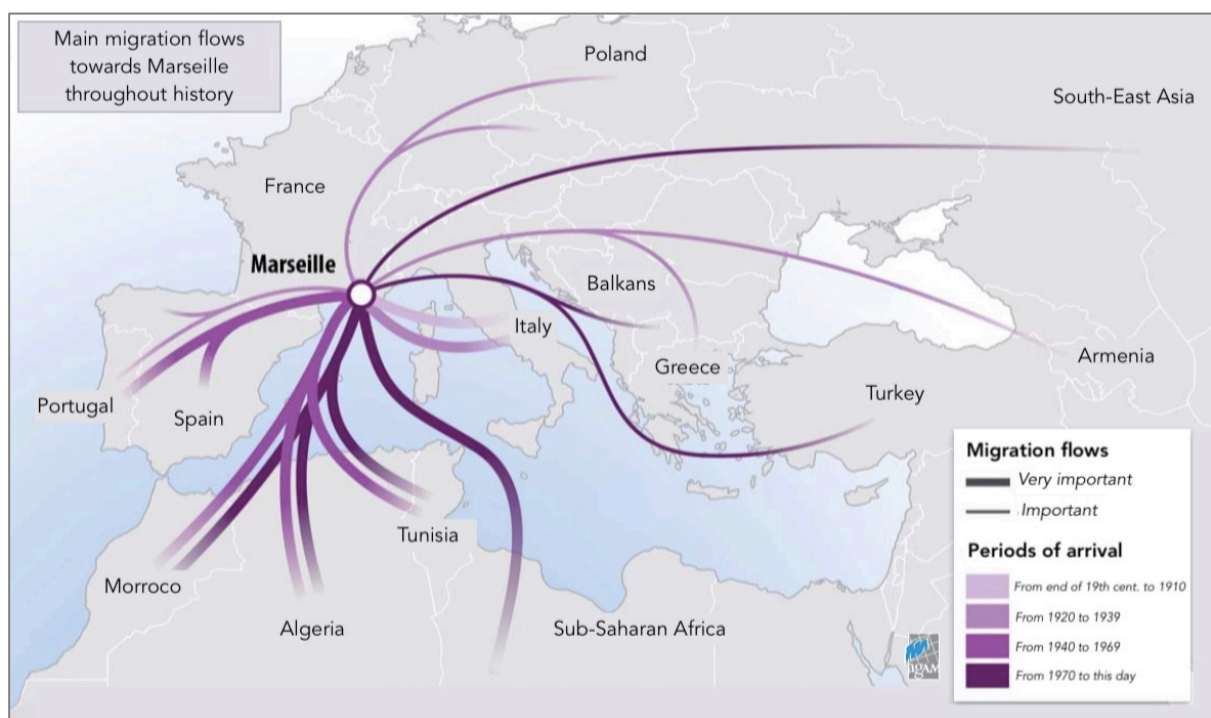(source: Insee, census 2012; own graph)*

*Figure 11: Migration flows towards Marseille throughout history
(source: Agam, 2015, p.9)*

As an important Mediterranean port since the Greek Antiquity, Marseille has been a place of mixing and exchange between diverse populations for more than two centuries (Agam, 2015, p.7) (Figure 11). The 1st and 2nd districts, due to their location by the Old Port, have always been lands of arrival and zones of transit for the successive waves of migration across the Mediterranean Sea, but also traditional working-class neighborhoods (Témime, 1985, p.38). Some neighborhoods of those districts, such as Belsunce and Noailles, still function as arrival neighborhoods for migrants, with strong local networks of solidarity (Témime, 1985, p.46). Certain communities have taken roots and developed attachment to those places. For example, Algerians have been coming to Marseille since the beginning of the 20th century and their residential mobility tends to stay within the same neighborhoods of those central districts (Témime, 1985, p.43; Mazella, 1996, p.123).

The local built environment

Marseille has an average population density of 36 people per ha (Insee, census 2014). This number is very low due to the presence of large natural parks and uninhabited spaces within the city's boundaries. Figure 12 shows the spatial distribution of the population and the concentration in central areas.
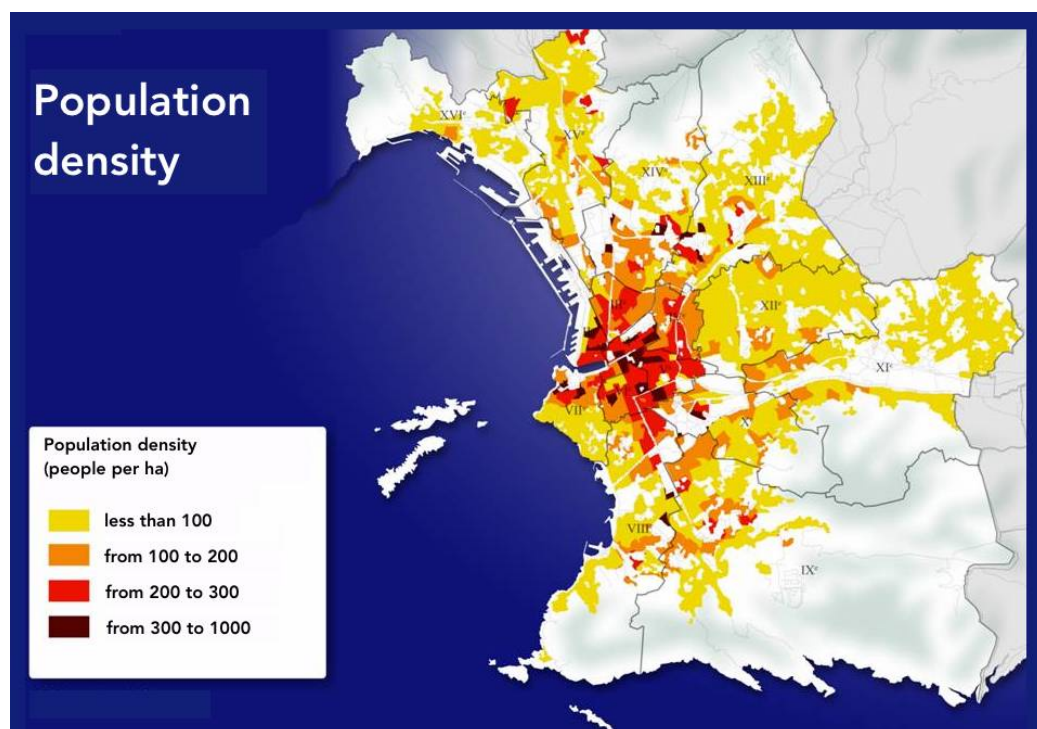

Figure 12: Population density in Marseille, 2009 (people per ha)
(source: www.agam.org, 2017)

The density in the 1ˢᵗ district is 224 people per ha (Insee, census 2014), which is considered to be very high. This can be explained by its central location and its compact old urban fabric. As a historic district, it is densely built, but it also possesses some imposing housing blocks from the 1960s. Belsunce's density is 240 people per ha, close to the district's average, but it reaches 324 people per ha in the case of Noailles (Insee, census 2012). This can be due to the presence of other, non-residential functions in Belsunce (shopping mall, library, museum, offices, etc.), whereas Noailles is filled with residential buildings and has almost no open space, apart from narrow streets.

As for the types of dwellings in Marseille, there is a strong predominance of apartments over houses (Figure 13). This data is not available at the scale of the neighborhood; however, my fieldwork confirms that this predominance of apartments is also the case in Belsunce and Noailles. Figure 13 shows that a large portion of dwellings in Marseille consists of apartments built after World War II. This can be explained by the construction of massive social housing complexes in the periphery of the city in that period. In the case of Noailles, as it is an older, inner-city neighborhood, almost all dwellings are apartments built before 1945. As for Belsunce, it is also dominated by apartments, but the age of buildings is more diverse, as some portions of the neighborhood have been redeveloped over time. Except the area around Cours Belsunce (an important paseo/promenade) and along La Canebière boulevard, which both have higher and more recent buildings, the rest of Noailles and Belsunce has an average of 5-storeys high buildings, generally attached in continuous rows. Also, many buildings in the area have a high historical value in terms of architectural heritage.
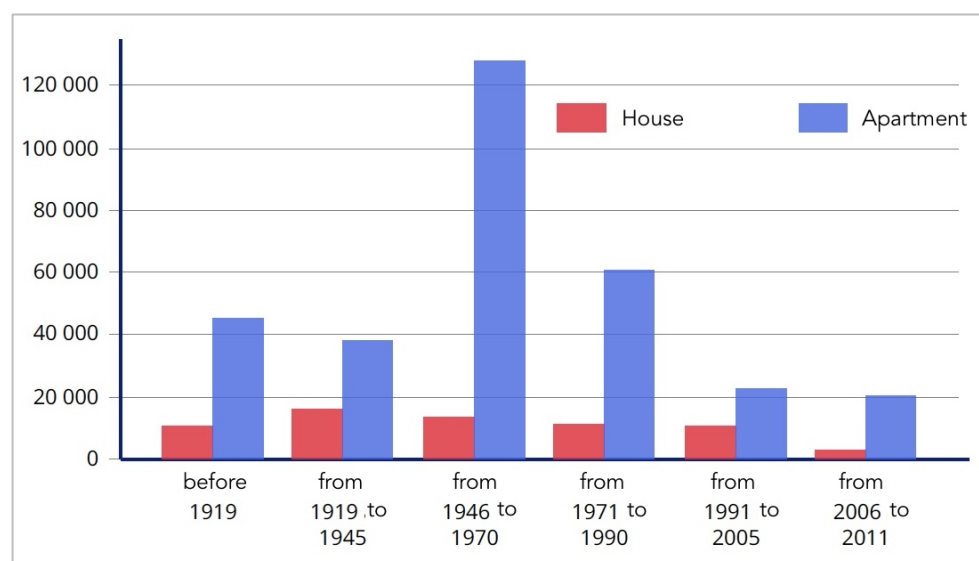

Figure 13: Type and year of construction of dwellings in Marseille
(source: www.insee.fr, census 2014)

During my fieldwork, I have observed that Belsunce and Noailles are mixed-use neighborhoods where very few streets have a strictly residential function. Within walking distance, one can find an important quantity and a wide variety of shops, restaurants and services. More specifically, Noailles is known for its various food stores and its outdoor market; and Belsunce, for its wholesale shops of clothing, fabrics and accessories. The area around Cours Belsunce and along La Canebière boulevard hold bigger urban functions related to entertainment (cinema, museum, etc.), shopping (chain stores, shopping mall), tourism industry, various companies and government offices, as well as public institutions, like a large public library (the Alcazar library), etc. To complete the mix of urban functions, the neighborhood also houses multiple places of worship, schools and kindergartens, and numerous community organizations.

Related to its central location, the area of the neighborhood is fully built and urbanized, leaving very few open spaces. Belsunce and Noailles' public spaces are very limited, generally very mineral (apart from Cours Belsunce and Cours Saint-Louis' nice tree cover) and without urban furniture (such as benches). There are no public green spaces (only private ones), almost no parks nor outdoor sports facilities. In parallel with this, there is also limited space for vehicle circulation within the neighborhood, as well as limited parking space. Due to the old age of the neighborhood's urban fabric, some streets are very narrow and only allow pedestrian traffic, bicycles and motorcycles. Many streets have narrow or no sidewalks, and no setback between the sidewalk or the street and the buildings' facades. In contrast to this tight urban fabric, Belsunce and Noailles are crossed by two important transport axes, namely La Canebière boulevard and Cours Belsunce, the latter being part of a 7 km-long North-South axis across the city.

Also related to its location in the city center, the neighborhood is very easily accessible and well-connected to the public transport network (metro, tram, bus and even ferries). It is conveniently located close to Marseille central train station (Gare Saint-Charles) as well. Finally, the neighborhood is situated by the Old Port and the sea, and their multitude of touristic attractions (Ferris wheel, museums, historic monuments, street performances, boat tours, etc.).

During my fieldwork, I learned that Belsunce and Noailles are well-known for their vibrant ethnic and cultural diversity. Some emblematic places in the neighborhood have a strong identity and are seen as landmarks in the city, like the Old Port, La Canebière boulevard, Cours Belsunce, Noailles market, the Alcazar library, etc. Some citizens have a strong attachment to those places. Some spaces of the neighborhood are associated with certain groups of people, while other spaces are felt as being open to all. Symbolic

dimensions of the neighborhood's built environment will come up more clearly in the next section, as I relate respondents' lived experiences. For the remaining part of the present section, focus will be put on the neighborhood's visual (or tangible) aspects.

Figures 14 and 16 present aerial views of Belsunce and Noailles that show the layout of their urban fabric. Figures 15 and 17 present the location of some of Belsunce and Noailles' key places, which will be referred to and discussed in the next chapter. Then, pictures on the following pages provide an illustration of those places, as well as some typical streetscapes.

Figure 14: Aerial view of Belsunce (source: Google Earth, 2018)

Figure 15: Some of Belsunce's key places
(source of basemap: QuickMapServices, 2018; own drawing)

Figure 16: Aerial view of Noailles (source: Google Earth, 2018)
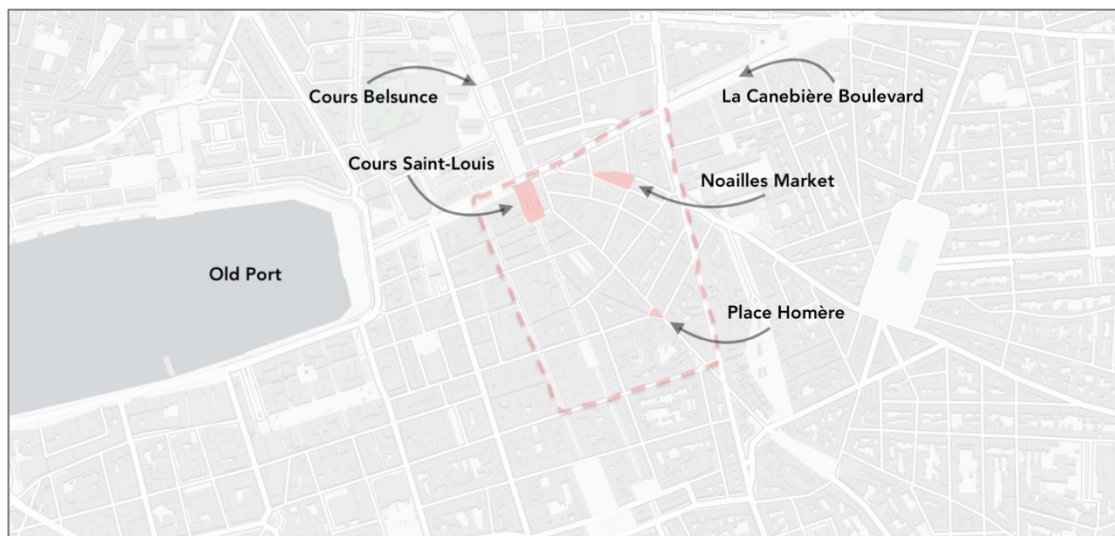

Figure 17: Some of Noailles' key places
(source of basemap: QuickMapServices, 2018; own drawing)

Cours Belsunce

…is a 300-meter-long stretch of street with restricted traffic, large sidewalks and big trees. It has mixed uses and is a highly frequented and popular place.

Cours Belsunce, looking northwards, with Labourdette towers on the left

*Large sidewalks on Eastern side of Cours Belsunce with some terraces;
Labourdette towers on the right; older buildings on the left*

Cours Belsunce, looking southwards, with Alcazar library on the left

Alcazar Library

…is a public library located on the site of a former theater and named after it. Open in 2004, it is a modern, spacious and popular place.

Alcazar Library: emblematic entrance door, interior

*A view of Cours Belsunce with Alcazar library on the right and
a straight perspective towards Porte d'Aix (triumph arch)*

Other places in Belsunce

Porte d'Aix, looking South, towards Belsunce neighborhood

Porte d'Aix and its roundabout, looking northwards

*Marseille's Old Port, located just South of Belsunce, at the basis of
La Canebiere boulevard, looking northwards*

Archeological remains, private park of the City Museum, located behind the shopping mall; office buildings and Labourdette towers in the background

View of Belsunce from one of the Labourdette towers, with Alcazar Library in the foreground and the central train station in the background

*Crossing of La Canebière boulevard, looking towards
Cours Saint-Louis and Noailles*

La Canebière boulevard with some department stores

*Street of Belsunce, perpendicular to Cours Belsunce,
with Labourdette towers in the background*

*Typical street of Belsunce with apartments at upper floors and
shops at street level (mostly owned by Chinese merchants)*

Residential street in the North Eastern part of Belsunce

View of backside of apartment buildings, seen from a vacant plot,
in the North Eastern part of Belsunce

<u>Noailles Market</u>

…is a popular outdoor market of fruits and vegetables in Noailles, open every day except Sunday.

Noailles market and surrounding apartment buildings, looking North West

Noailles market and surrounding shops, looking East; metro station in the back

Northern side of Noailles market with shops and restaurants, looking West; pedestrian street leading towards La Canebière boulevard

Other places in Noailles

Street corner in Noailles, with pedestrian street on the right, leading to the market

Same street corner, with pedestrian street on the right, leading to the market; seen from a window of the apartment where I was staying

Apartment buildings in Noailles, seen from a window of the apartment where I was staying, looking West

Street in Noailles with multiple Senegalese hairdressers and stores

One of the main streets of Noailles, with apartments at upper floors and shops at street level

Very popular store in Noailles, owned by an African man

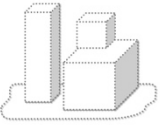*Residential street in Noailles, embellished with plants by the residents*

Place Homère, Noailles, looking North West

Street artists and crowd on Cours Saint-Louis in Noailles, looking towards Cours Belsunce

Finally, the table on the next page summarizes the main features of the built environment of Belsunce and Noailles using the four dimensions (physical, functional, spatial, symbolic), as explained in the theoretical framework. Those features will serve as a basis for the analysis of the empirical data.

Physical[6]		High and very high density Physical proximity to neighbors, crowded environment Attached buildings, continuous row Not much open space, no green space Human-scale, medieval urban fabric Tight streets, organic pattern Tight or no sidewalks, no setback Average of 5-storeys high buildings Predominance of old buildings High architectural value, architectural heritage Apartments of various sizes Limited to very limited space for vehicle circulation

Functional		Mix of uses on almost every street
		(few streets with only residential use)
		High quantity and wide variety of shops and services
		Belsunce: lots of wholesale shops (clothes, accessories)
		Noailles: lots of food stores, as well as the market
		Entertainment function and bigger, chain stores located on
		    Cours Belsunce and La Canebière boulevard
		Lots of places of worship
		Presence of community center, youth center, as well as
		    numerous and various nonprofit associations
		Almost no parks, nor sports facilities
		Limited public spaces
		No urban furniture, no benches
		Not much parking spaces for vehicles
		Also important function of tourism

Spatial		Neighborhoods located in the 1st district, city center Compact area, favorable to pedestrians Very close to the Old Port and many touristic attractions Close to the sea Very close to the central train station (Gare St-Charles) Very well connected to public transport (metro, tram, bus) Crossed by La Canebière boulevard, an important axis Crossed by a 7 km-long North-South axis across the city
Symbolic		Hub of diversity Some places have a strong identity, landmarks Historical importance Strong place attachment to certain places for some people Some spaces are appropriated by certain groups of people

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[6] Except from Cours Belsunce, Cours Saint-Louis and La Canebière boulevard which have larger setbacks and sidewalks, as well as higher and more recent buildings.

In this section, I will present results of my empirical fieldwork. I will look at the rich spectrum of practices and experiences of living together and explain how they are translated in the neighborhood spaces. More precisely, I will analyse various types of unfocused interactions occurring in public and semipublic spaces. I will draw connections with the four dimensions of the built environment (physical, functional, spatial, symbolic) in order to see how it shapes coexistence and encounters with difference. To do this, I will first look at general patterns of coexistence and encounter in the neighborhood spaces; and second, I will focus on three specific places, namely a paseo/promenade, an outdoor market and a public library.

1. GENERAL PATTERNS OF COEXISTENCE AND ENCOUNTER IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD SPACES

Peaceful but distant coexistence

Many respondents mentioned a peaceful but distant coexistence as one of the main modes of living together in the neighborhood. Most people said coexistence runs smoothly and described it as relaxed, undisturbed. Some spoke about respectful or convivial relations and a good general atmosphere. My field observations confirm this. Most people said there was no problem with coexistence, no violence, no special tensions. One person explicitly mentioned there was no racism. Some respondents presented the peaceful coexistence in relative terms, explaining it's good in Belsunce and Noailles in comparison to other diverse neighborhoods of Marseille:

> "There is no big conflict like we could find elsewhere" (Hakim)

> "It goes pretty well considering the fact that it's diverse. There is no animosity between cultures" (Sophie)

Some respondents referred to keeping a polite distance and being reserved or held back as a way to maintain this peaceful coexistence. For example, neighbors exchange greetings and that's it, the interaction ends there:

> "Always the smile, good morning, good evening, while staying a bit reserved" (Amina)

According to Amina, not being too insistent or not coming on too strong during unfocused interactions with neighbors or strangers in public and semipublic spaces is also a way to respect other people's privacy and avoid uneasiness or rejection. As Fabien put it:

> "People come to you, but at the same time, keep some distance.
> That's what I like. It's not too much"

The practice of keeping a polite distance as a mode of living together can be especially important in dense neighborhoods like Belsunce and Noailles. Indeed, when one lives in such physical proximity to neighbors, in a relatively crowded urban environment where there are always people close by, one might particularly appreciate that their personal space is respected. It's also common that people living in dense neighborhoods need to take a break and move away from the crowd, as May-Anh explained:

> "We often talk about it with my flatmates or my friends, there are moments when we get saturated [or overwhelmed] by Marseille […] The wind in your face, the sun, the sea, the flows [of movement], the crowd, etc. [We need] to escape, sometimes"

For those who have the means, escaping can mean leaving the city. For others, it can be done by going to other, lesser dense parts of the city or by staying inside their dwelling. Hence, physical characteristics of the built environment, such as density, can have an impact on encounters, and influence the modes of coexistence in the neighborhood.

Unfocused interactions and their effects

I thought fleeting encounters and light chatting were an important component of living together, but only a few respondents brought it up. For them, informal conversations and superficial or small talk are an easy form of interaction, which happens casually through their daily routines:

> "On the street, in the elevator […] you can talk about the weather, exchange 2-3 words with a guy who works at the market or a lady while waiting for the bus. Those exchanges are not super deep, but it's still part of living together […] It doesn't go further, but maybe there's no need, maybe that's not the point, maybe that's just how it's done, this living together" (Mai-Anh)

For some respondents, the effect of this is a pleasant feeling that they're not just anonymous strangers in the neighborhood. As Mai-Anh mentioned, those fleeting encounters can happen almost anywhere, at any time, since they are relatively short and easy or light.

On the other hand, some respondents were more critical about the outcomes of fleeting encounters and aware that, due to their limited format, they are not sufficient to know a person, to change one's opinion about an ethnic group or to claim that different communities mix together. Those respondents mainly argued that repeated focused interactions at the individual level were necessary in order to bring people of different backgrounds together and build mutual trust.

Similar to the findings on fleeting encounters, I thought glancing, passive observation and visual exposure were important components of dealing with diversity, but only a few respondents talked about it. For them, observing diversity is a real pleasure. About Cours Saint-Louis, a small square at the border of Noailles and Belsunce, Sophie said:

> "It's a nice place for 'watching' […] There, the whole Marseille is passing. It's super enjoyable: you sit at a terrace and you watch all the people passing"

As Fabien put it:

> "It's folkloric […] I like looking at people. I sit in a cafe, I watch people pass by. I find it super interesting"

Visual exposure to diversity can happen anywhere in the neighborhood and at any time, as soon as people see other people, without necessarily being deliberate or conscious. Observation is the deliberate action of looking and commonly happens in streets with a commercial function (especially those with terraces), in parks and squares (which Belsunce and Noailles do not have much of) or in frequented areas in general. It is facilitated by the presence of urban furniture, such as benches. The absence of public benches in Belsunce and Noailles might partially explain why respondents did not talk more about observation or people-watching. Finally, one can enjoy looking at people from their window or their balcony, a practice which I have often noticed in the neighborhood. This is most common in areas where the residential function is mixed with the commercial, bringing a flow of people and action to look at. Physical characteristics of the built environment, such as pedestrian-friendly

streets, human-scale architecture and a tight urban fabric are also favorable, because one's window or balcony is at an adequate distance to see.

Again, I had similar findings concerning acclimatisation and familiarisation with diversity as effects of unfocused interactions. I thought this was a key aspect to understand coexistence, but only a few respondents referred to this. About his adaptation to the life in Noailles, Fabien said:

> "It's super diverse. I like it, but […] it brings lots of noise, lots of movement. It's not a calm neighborhood […] This bothered me at first. Then, I got accustomed […] and what I disliked at first is what keeps me here now. This diversity, all this movement […] Lots of things happen here"

Sophie talked about her experience of coexistence and getting accustomed to the presence of men from the Cape Verdean community on her street:

> "At first, it's true, we thought: those tall black guys who are always in the street drinking beer, I don't really feel like passing between them every day. In the end, no, they're rather nice, those tall black guys"

Mai-Anh illustrated the importance of visibility, seeing and catching glimpses, when mentioning her curiosity to learn about other communities:

> "In Marseille, Ramadan is visible. It's part of the rhythm of life […] The month of Ramadan really forms part of the calendar […] In Noailles, it completely reorganises everything […] It's really fascinating. I've been seeing it for a couple of years now […] I get to know another culture. We live together, so I adapt myself to this rhythm at which the city beats. Most people get in tune with this rhythm"

In the end, the wider effects of unfocused interactions might remain unconscious for most people, as it is rather rare that someone would be able to analyse and explain their learning process of living with difference. For example, when respondents talked about becoming familiar or accustomed to difference, they generally referred to getting to know a specific person, a neighbor or a colleague from another culture, mostly through focused interactions. Only a few respondents (like Sophie or Mai-Anh) meant it in the sense of becoming familiar with a different ethnic group (as a whole) through unfocused interactions.

<u>Differences between generations</u>

When discussing about coexistence and intercultural mixing, some respondents indicated that practices and experiences differ from one generation to another. There are two perspectives on this issue.

The first category thought young people tend to mix more and be more open to difference, while older people mix less and stay more within their respective community. Some respondents mentioned older people can be distrustful (Amina, 60 yrs) or have more difficulty including themselves in society (Fabien, 35 yrs). About children, Laurie (30 yrs) said:

> "Only from the fact that they see each other at school, it's more mixed […] they all play together"

About teenagers, Ms. Soukeyna (35 yrs) said:

> "Teens mix more […] Often I see them hanging out together"

According to Tsun-Ting (25 yrs), the youth mixes naturally and is open to the world. He believes intercultural mix at the wider, societal scale is done through or thanks to the youth.

The answers from those respondents confirm the importance of the school as a place of encounter and mixing across lines of difference. Diversity of pupils studying together in schools might explain why the youth tends to be more open than older people. Hence, encounters happening in semipublic spaces can also have an influence on those occurring in public spaces.

On the other hand, the second category said new generations mix less than the previous. According to them, the different communities in the neighborhood were mixing more and getting along better in the past, as fraternal relations and camaraderie between them were stronger. They also believed there was more mutual help and solidarity before, along with warmer neighboring relations. Whereas today, M. Amazit (65 yrs) noted, personal interest goes before fraternity and people tend to keep to themselves and be more closed. Maybe this has more to do with wider structural, historical or societal change and not so much with the local built environment.

In my field observations, I have noted older people were less present in public space in comparison to other age groups. As a result, they have fewer opportunities for encounters and social interactions in public space. The fact

that there are no green spaces, almost no parks, not much inviting public spaces in general, and no public benches in the neighborhood might make it not so interesting for older people to spend time outside. Other age groups might have higher tolerance to staying longer in this rather rough, mineral, urban environment, where there is nowhere to sit. This example shows how physical and functional characteristics of the built environment (such as absence of certain functions and infrastructures, as well as comfort) can have different impacts on people's practices and experiences in the city depending on the age group.

No mixing or living parallel to others

To the question whether communities in the neighborhood mix with each other or live parallel lives, some respondents had a rather sharp opinion. Some personally choose not to mix with others, as this father explained:

> "Living together is not interesting for us [him and his family] because we don't have the same mentality, the same character. We don't want improper things, things that aren't normal. Certain people, mostly the Algerian community, we don't have the same lifestyle. It's different […] Some people want to mix, we are not interested because certain things do not fit our habits. So, everyone for themselves" (Adrien)

Respondents who share a similar attitude towards intercultural mixing and social interactions all have very limited or quasi-nonexistent use of local public spaces and prefer staying home. This highlights that people who wish to avoid or limit encounters with others use the neighborhood spaces and the built environment in a certain way. Hence, the relationship of causality between the built environment and encounters can also work 'in reverse', namely when the preferred modes of dealing with difference influence and mediate people's perception and use of the built environment.

Beyond individual preferences, some respondents said there simply is no mix or interactions between people of different communities in the neighborhood. One referred to individualism and said people live side by side in society in general. Some said communities are closed and people stay among themselves, with their own 'kind'. One respondent used the terms hermetic and impermeable to describe intergroup relations. Finally, some respondents said intercultural mixing doesn't exist, that it's a myth, a collective lie or a branding element for politicians. As Ms. Berger put it:

"Does a diverse city imply that people who live in it are mixing?
[…] Diversity alone doesn't create an intercultural mix"

Some respondents identified making business and having financial interest as the only source or reason for mixing people of different communities:

"When there's business, yes for sure, but outside of this, no. They will mix only for business" (Luc)

"What can generate mixing is business" (Ms. Berger)

For certain people, openness and contact with difference might be associated to the context of trade or commercial exchanges. In my field observations, I saw Chinese and Maghrebi shop owners involved in business relations (e.g. working together in the commercial streets of Belsunce or Noailles, making deliveries to one another, etc.). I am unsure which language is used during those interactions, but the most relevant one for transactions and negotiations might simply be the language of numbers. As M. Shan told me, Chinese people might not have much knowledge of French, but they do know numbers.

Many respondents formulated an opinion on the Chinese community, referring to it as being one of the most isolated and distant, saying they don't mix, they stay within themselves. Some said the Chinese community is among the stronger, more organized and more communitarian ones in the neighborhood. Chinese people were described as very polite and respectful, but also reserved and less warm.

The language barrier was identified by respondents as an important limitation. Amina mentioned it's difficult to gauge or understand this community, "because they don't say much". This was confirmed by M. Shan who explained Chinese people look closed, but they aren't. It's just because they speak very little French. He also pointed there are no schools for Chinese adults to learn the language, which could explain why this community mixes less with others.

Patterns of segregation

Many respondents talked about various aspects of socio-spatial segregation, how it translates in the neighborhood space and how it relates to coexistence and encounters. At the microscale, respondents noted the appropriation of

spaces by certain groups of people. For example, Porte d'Aix, a public space around a triumph arch in Belsunce, is used a lot by the Comorian community:

> "The Comorians, it's their square […] You see them there, chatting" (Hakim)

Nonetheless, the space is not exclusive to them and remains open to everyone. I have observed various non-Comorian families with children using this space. As Viviane answered Hakim during our interview:

> "…but also newcomers [use it], people who are not yet settled, who are arriving. There are a lot of migrants there"

Porte d'Aix is a wide, open space located on a roundabout, at the limit between Belsunce, the 2nd and the 3rd districts. The physical and spatial characteristics of this place (namely spaciousness and location) give an impression of 'no man's land', which might explain why it still feels open to everyone despite the overrepresentation of a certain group.

In the case of Place Louise Michel, a small square located at an intersection in Belsunce, it is used predominantly by Chibanis (old Maghrebi men, labor migrants from the 1960s):

> "It's the square of Chibanis […] It's their HQ[7]" (Hakim)

It is an important meeting place for them, as well as for other people from the larger Maghrebi community. Many Chibanis live close to Place Louise Michel and spend a lot of time in the cafe located in one of the square's corner. The surrounding area is used mainly by the Maghrebi community with dwellings, shops, restaurants and mosques. The urban fabric is characterized by tight streets and human-scale architecture. The square is like the heart of a village. Its space feels quite intimate, almost semi-private, like an outdoor, communal living room. It is rare to see people from groups other than Maghrebi using the space; and when it happens, they generally don't go unnoticed. There is no explicit control of the space, but it does feel a bit closed and appropriated (to me, and to some of my respondents). This example shows the interplay of physical, functional, spatial and symbolic dimensions of the built environment, as well as their joint influence on the way people experience and use the neighborhood space. Those conditions also mediate encounters and social interactions.

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[7] HQ: headquarters

Finally, in the case of Place Homère, a tiny square with a statue located at an intersection in Noailles, the level of appropriation and exclusion reaches a peak. It is used almost exclusively by a gang of young men involved in drug dealing and who control it by showing territorial behaviors:

> "It's very very rough. It has always been a place of traffic and gatherings of youngsters who are not from the neighborhood. This place is not easy" (Sophie)

> "People stay there, hang around, at all times, even during the night. It's a hyper appropriated space and it's complicated to come […] Me, as a young woman, I don't feel…" (Mai-Anh)

This example shows that functional and symbolic characteristics of the built environment (namely the use and identity of a place) can mediate social interactions. It also links to the question of gender in the use of public and semipublic spaces. Men are overrepresented in many parts of Belsunce and Noailles. This might relate to the gender division in Muslim cultures and the way this division is translated in the use of public space. The male-dominated streetscape generally has discriminatory or prohibitive effects on women's use of space, as they can feel out of place or think they should avoid certain places of the neighborhood:

> "There are cafes or bars where there are only young guys. We wouldn't really dare to enter" (Laurie)

As Fabien explained:

> "This neighborhood is super macho. I have friends who are transgender and who never pass through Noailles. It's too risky […] As for women, my best friend used to live in Noailles and she never really had problems, but she wasn't so comfortable to get back home at night when we were going out. So, I was walking her home"

Encounters in the neighborhood space can take a very different meaning depending on who's interacting with whom. Opportunities for encounters, as well as the quality and outcomes of those interactions, are conditioned by gender and sexual orientation. While this relates less to the built environment, it's still important to keep in mind.

Besides the topic of appropriation of space, respondents also described certain patterns of microsegregation found within the neighborhood. In this regard, mostly spatial and functional dimensions of the built environment come into play:

> "Each community has more or less their own spaces […] their hairdressers, their cafes, their restaurants, their taxiphones [call shops]" (Viviane)

As a whole, Belsunce and Noailles are diverse and heterogenous. At smaller scales, this diversity is sometimes articulated in more or less homogenous pockets, spatially distributed across the neighborhood in various patterns, clusters or networks. For example, a block of 3-4 streets in Noailles shows a concentration of Senegalese hairdressers, shops and restaurants, which doesn't necessarily mean tenants in the flats on upper floors are Senegalese. Other groups might be organized differently, as Ms. Soukeyna noted:

> "[Cape Verdeans] have their own neighborhood within Noailles, they all live there […] If you go there, you will see them […] Compared to other communities, we [Senegalese] are not really… we are a bit spread out. But Cape Verdeans are almost all grouped there. We gather here, but we don't all live in the same place. We live a bit everywhere"

In the case of the Chinese community of Belsunce, in addition to spatial concentration, there is a shared tendency in housing choices, as well as an apparent specialization in one niche of business. Ms. Berger, resident of one of the towers on Cours Belsunce, explained:

> "They've taken up the business of Jews and Arabs in Belsunce. They've taken up wholesale stores of clothing, shoes, tailoring. Then, they've bought flats in the towers. If you look at mailboxes, you see an unbelievable number of Chinese people who live here now […] One of them is a contractor for all Chinese who renovate their flat. They must have wholesale prices for the materials […] They all have the same door […] Behind, they all have the same white floor […] They have something else in common, they all have the same religion. They're Christians […] They're all from the same region, in the South of China. Same religion, same region. All of them. In the 3 towers. Idem. It's funny"

Although it might seem, from those different examples of microsegregation, that communities lead parallel lives or have parallel networks, it's not entirely the case. Reality is more intricate and manifold. Public and semipublic spaces of the neighborhood, and the built environment, are used, shared and appropriated in varying ways; thus creating varying contexts for encounters and interactions.

In Ms. Soukeyna's hair salon, for instance, the clientele is mixed, but habits and practices of clients tend to be differentiated along ethnic lines:

> "People who come to get their hair done are mostly European, White or Arab women. Black, African women like me, they know what to do; most often, they do their hair themselves. As for [products] sales, we have more Black, African clientele and fewer Europeans. We sell more [beauty products] to people from our community, but for hairdressing, we sell more to Europeans […]
> It works like that. It's divided" (Ms. Soukeyna)

Specialty shops and ethnic shops generally provide favorable environments for encounters with difference. There, different people come together due to a common need or interest and one can get a glimpse of another culture through unfocused interactions. Hence, commercial uses (functional dimension of the built environment) play an important role in people's practices and experiences of living together in diverse neighborhoods.

Talking about the benefits of a mixed clientele, M. Zainoun told me that clients from various origins come to his Lebanese bakery: Syrians, Iraqis, Egyptians, Armenians, Middle Easterners. He explained there are few Lebanese in Marseille, not enough in fact, to support a business. He opened his bakery in Noailles, where he knew there would be a lot of buyers for his products.

This links to the question of the positive effects of segregation. In addition to promoting ethnic entrepreneurship, the presence of a population base which is sufficiently large and spatially concentrated allows to have a rich offer of specialized services and shops. Those functional and spatial features of the built environment (namely functional mix, diverse commercial offer, as well as proximity and accessibility) are attractive and beneficial for the diverse residents and users of Belsunce and Noailles:

"We have everything in the neighborhood, at a cheap price. This relates to all the communities living together. Since it's an African neighborhood, with Arabs, Africans, us [Senegalese], Comorians: there are lots of shops. So, we find everything we want […] Also, there's halal food. This is important for Muslims" (Ms. Soukeyna)

Similarly, spatial segregation of ethnic groups also encourages the presence of places of worship and cultural associations in the neighborhood. Accessibility and proximity to those places (functional and spatial dimensions) make it easier for people to meet their spiritual and cultural needs, and to find moral and psychological support. It also fosters a strong local culture and identity (symbolic dimension):

"It's a very very African neighborhood […] It's positive for us because we don't feel homesick/disoriented, we feel at home […] Here, I'm not worried to go to the mosque or the prayer room. I'm not anxious. I can fully live my religion […] Once, I had to leave Marseille and live in another city where I didn't have that […] There was this disorientation/homesickness. There was this lack, this void" (Ms. Soukeyna)

Mosques were often cited by respondents as places of encounter, since the neighborhood is home to different ethnic groups who share the Muslim faith. Comorian, Algerian and Senegalese Muslim respondents told me there is no difference between them when they are inside the mosque. Talking about a small Senegalese prayer room in Noailles, Ms. Soukeyna explained:

"For the Friday prayer, they open the room to everybody. Since there are too many people, they open it to welcome the rest that couldn't fit in the mosque. Friday, everybody goes out, you know, Arabs, Comorians, Senegalese, they're almost all Muslims"

Hence, religious and cultural institutions and associations in the neighborhood (functional dimension of the built environment) have an influence on people's practices and experiences of living together. When telling me about activities happening each year in the neighborhood during 'Interreligious Dialog Days', Sophie highlighted the mediating role of religion in social interactions:

"It's often because of religion that antagonisms come about […] Thus, peace can also come through religion"

A balance between mixing and parallel lives

In the previous subsections, I have presented various modes of coexistence. In my field observations, I have seen that in fact those modes coexist at the same time and are not mutually exclusive. Indeed, to the question whether communities in the neighborhood mix with each other or live parallel lives, most respondents gave a nuanced or ambivalent answer and described varying combinations of both. In short, a few respondents said "they mix, but…", some said "they mostly live in parallel, but…" and some said "it's a balance of both".

The first group stated communities do interact and the neighborhood is a real "melting pot" (Tsun-Ting). However, they noted that mixed marriages, which can be considered as the apogee of intercultural mixing, remain rare cases.

The second group of respondents thought the different communities in the neighborhood live rather parallel lives, although there is great proximity and some occasional mixing:

"We get along well, but we don't really mix" (Ms. Soukeyna)

"We rub shoulders, we are very close, but we don't necessarily communicate […] There's not much fusion nor sharing between the different communities" (Mai-Anh)

Some respondents mentioned only a minority of people from different backgrounds mix, but due to different lifestyles and family models (Laurie), people mostly stay within their respective paths (M. Amazit).

A few respondents pointed to the bridging work done by individuals as a key ingredient for mixing communities:

"Sometimes, a single person can make a difference, can create a link between communities"

, Sophie said, referring to an old Corsican woman who often hangs out with the men from the Cape Verdean community and thanks to whom intercultural relations run smoother in Sophie's street. Or, as Viviane put it:

"It's people who individually connect with other communities […] It's not so much the group who mixes, rather it's some elements who ensure the link between all"

Finally, the third group of respondents said both modes of coexistence exist at the same time. Certain people want to mix, others don't. Certain places are open to everyone, others are appropriated by a specific group. It's easy to engage in light, superficial interactions, if one feels like it, but one can also keep a polite distance. This shows the interest and value of having a variety of spaces in the neighborhood to accommodate the wide array of needs and preferences.

Some respondents explained how they enjoy having both the opportunity for diverse encounters in the public space, but also the possibility to withdraw in a quiet private space:

> "I really love diversity, but I love to be calm at home […] When I go out, I am IN the diversity and I can have rich conversations and that's why it's awesome here […] We have at our door people from all over the world […] But when I need silence and calm and solitude […] I stay home" (Ms. Oziol)

This balance between mixing and parallel lives occurs at the individual level, but also at a wider scale. Fabien explained that communities can stay within themselves and maintain their culture and traditions in certain moments, but can also open up, mix and adapt in other moments:

> "This neighborhood allows communities to gather and spend time together. At the same time, the community is part of a larger community which is that of the city […] On one hand, they can live in parallel and on the other, they are integrated in something larger […] When you live in Noailles, you can have both"

In terms of location, residents of Belsunce and Noailles are relatively privileged. They live in a diverse neighborhood that can feel like a village and where their community of origin might be nearby, but they also live downtown, close to everything the city has to offer. The following example illustrates the joint influence of spatial, functional and physical characteristics of the built environment (namely location, proximity, mix of functions or uses, density and scale) on encounters and street life:

> "Belsunce Noailles are neighborhoods, but at the same time, it's the heart of the city […] The supermarket next to my place is open until midnight […] because it's a big city, it's always frequented […] When you go out, you inevitably meet someone you know [because] Marseille's city center is very small, you do everything

on foot […] It's funny, this balance between a small village life and a metropolitan life" (Mai-Anh)

Many respondents mentioned this dual identity of Belsunce and Noailles as being simultaneously small local entities, as well as Marseille's city center:

"The first thing [I like about Noailles] is the centrality. We have access to everything. At any hour, all the time. And then, we are lucky, on our street […] we have created pretty strong links […] It's almost a small village. We all know each other" (Sophie)

As Fabien put it:

"It's like a small village here […] It happens that I stop to say Hi to someone, because I know some people, but at the same time I'm also a bit anonymous. It's in between. I'm both known and a bit anonymous"

Some respondents highlighted the differences between Belsunce and Noailles and high-density residential neighborhoods located in the northern periphery of Marseille. They felt Belsunce and Noailles are more open, more flexible, with less control and more freedom. Sophie explained:

"There is a feeling of intrusion when we enter those neighborhoods, which we really don't have in the city center. We have nothing to do there […] What reason do we have to be there? […] Whereas downtown, in a neighborhood like Noailles, you never feel unwelcome […] You have the right to be here"

The centrality of the neighborhood, as well as the presence of a mix of uses or functions cause a lot of passage. All kinds of people come and go, with various purposes. The volume of people, as well as the diversity, make the city center more anonymous. Some respondents also noted Belsunce and Noailles' borders aren't clear for most people, which contributes in making the space feel more open, porous or permeable.

This illustrates how spatial, functional and symbolic characteristics of the built environment can have an effect on how people perceive space, how they feel they can use space and what kind of encounter they can expect in that space. Those questions surely influence and mediate encounters and interactions.

<u>Places and spaces of encounter</u>

Finally, to the question where do people from different communities meet and mingle, various places and spaces were mentioned by respondents. For example, department stores or some popular restaurants were identified as having a very diverse clientele. Intercultural encounters happening in those places are mainly unfocused, fleeting or distant. Schools, social centers, local associations and sports infrastructures were also mentioned as important places of encounter and mixing. As they offer mainly group activities, they are mostly sites of focused interactions, although some unfocused interactions also occur there.

However, the main space for intercultural encounter in Belsunce and Noailles remains the street. One of the main features of the neighborhood's built environment is the lack of inviting public spaces, parks or green spaces and urban furniture. People need to travel outside of the 1st district to enjoy green public spaces, or go to the seaside.

Hence, it is very common for residents of the neighborhood to gather in front of apartment buildings' entrance, to sit on doorsteps, to lean on bollards or simply to hang out in the streets. For certain people, this might also relate to the quality and size of private spaces and apartments. As Fabien explained:

> "People sit on the doorsteps of buildings because they have no place to go. Either it's dirty, either it's not maintained, either there's nothing. In the end, people occupy public space anyway […] It's part of the culture of people here, to gather outside"

Considering the importance of streets and sidewalks as a space of encounter and meeting, it's good that there's limited car circulation in the neighborhood, as the tight, medieval urban fabric is not favorable to it. Overall, this shows that qualities of the space, namely physical and functional characteristics of the built environment, mediate encounters.

The next section will give more details as to how the four dimensions of the local built environment can shape practices and experiences of living together by analysing three specific places.

Among the various places in Belsunce and Noailles, three specific ones were often mentioned by respondents as important places of encounter. My field observations confirm this information. Hence, I will use the example of those places for further elaboration of my analysis.

Cours Belsunce

One of the most important places of encounter in the neighborhood is Cours Belsunce (which could be categorized as a paseo/promenade). Respondents described it as a popular public place for meeting and going out:

> "Everybody meets there, in the bars of Cours Belsunce" (Pierre)

> "It's a thoroughfare where there are a lot of small eateries and bars, so it encourages sitting down and chatting" (Hakim)

As Ms. Soukeyna put it:

> "It's very attractive, mainly to go out […] for some distraction […] There are ice-cream parlours, restaurants and everything. It's very lively"

The large setbacks between the street and building facades offer lots of open space. Restaurants and cafes use this space for their terraces and some shops use it to display merchandise outside. Traffic is limited to tram tracks in the middle and a single lane for cars on one side. Large sidewalks on both sides have big trees providing shade. Those physical characteristics of Cours Belsunce make it inviting, comfortable and favorable to encounters, as people have ample space to stop and talk longer than if they were standing at a simple street corner. However, there is no urban furniture (benches). The only seating option is restaurant terraces. Maybe this is a deliberate strategy to make people consume or to limit 'unwanted' gatherings.

Apart from cafes and terraces, Cours Belsunce is also popular for shopping or just strolling along. It serves as a paseo or promenade where people go to see and be seen, which is typical of Mediterranean cultures. Thus, it has a strong social function, as a privileged site for unfocused interactions, with rich opportunities for glancing and visual exposure to diversity. Its excellent

location in the city center, easily reached by foot or public transport, at the crossroads of La Canebière, an important boulevard leading to the Old Port, also makes it conducive to encounters, as it attracts both locals, non-locals and tourists. Street performers, artists and acrobats also take advantage of those physical, functional and spatial characteristics of Cours Belsunce.

A few respondents highlighted Cours Belsunce's important function of passage. There's a constant flow of people passing and a lot of movement. Mai-Anh said she crosses it in her daily routines. As Laurie put it:

> "The big public space of the neighborhood is Cours Belsunce,
> but it's mostly a place of transit"

In addition to the older neighborhoods of Belsunce and Noailles, there are tall apartment towers, hotels, office buildings, as well as a shopping mall on the West side of Cours Belsunce. This contributes in making it an attractive multifunctional hub and giving it a 'downtown' feeling. The street crossing Cours Belsunce is part of a 7 km-long North-South axis in the city. The regular setback of the buildings offers a direct visual perspective on Porte d'Aix, a triumph arch located to the North. Those functional, spatial and physical characteristics accentuate the role of Cours Belsunce as a transit hub. Hence, it brings together not only shoppers and strollers, but also a variety of people passing and using the space for different purposes. In this context of transit, encounters between people are mainly unfocused and fleeting.

In relation to this high level of circulation, respondents felt Cours Belsunce is not appropriated by specific groups, as opposed to certain other squares in the area. Rather, it is a place "for all publics" (Laurie), a place where you can see "the entire world circulating" (Ms. Berger).

Some respondents praised the diversity found on Cours Belsunce. About commercial diversity, Abderrahman said:

> "It has become a commercial area of all races [….] a place of
> meeting and sharing […] like a commercial center that brings
> everybody together. You go to Belsunce, you will see Chinese
> selling, Africans selling, Arabs selling […] Hence, we see the
> vitality of Marseille, the vitality of those neighborhoods"

Cours Belsunce is also a hub of social and cultural diversity, where one is susceptible to spontaneously meet people from any country or culture. For

example, Ms. Oziol wanted to find someone who could identify a rare ancient book she had bought in Africa in the '70s:

> "Thanks to Cours Belsunce, I met an Eritrean [...] who told me what it was [...] He said I had the bible written in Ethiopian dialect [...] I wouldn't have found someone able to inform me elsewhere, in another district or in the 13th where I used to live in Paris"

Thus, Cours Belsunce is known in the neighborhood and beyond for its liveliness. It is emblematic of Marseille's diversity and, more specifically, Belsunce and Noailles' diversity. Also, Cours Belsunce has been a square or a public space since the 17th century, so it has a well-established identity in the collective memory as an important and historic place of gathering. Those symbolic dimensions, together with the other characteristics mentioned above, make it an attractive site, conducive to social interactions. It promotes contact between diverse people, mainly through unfocused encounters, but it also offers opportunities for longer, deeper interactions.

Figure 18: Aerial view of Cours Belsunce (source: Google Earth, 2018)

Physical		Large setbacks between street and buildings (open space) Large sidewalks, big trees providing shade Straight and uniform setback with direct visual perspective on the Arc de Triomphe (Porte d'Aix) Tram tracks in the middle, only one lane for cars on the side Tall modernist ensemble on the West side
		Inviting, comfortable and favorable to encounters (both unfocused and focused interactions Ample space to stop and have a conversation
Functional		Public space for meeting, going out or strolling along (*paseo*) Commercial function, restaurants and shopping Other functions around (offices, hotels, mall, apartments) Thoroughfare, passage, transit, high level of circulation No urban furniture (only seating is restaurants' terraces)
		Constant flow of people, lots of movement Ideal place for glancing and visual exposure to diversity (to see and be seen): unfocused interactions Attractive multifunctional hub brings together various people with different purposes Opportunities for both unfocused and focused interactions
Spatial		Located in the heart of the city center Tram lines passing through At the crossroads of La Canebière, an important boulevard leading to the Old Port Part of a 7 km-long North-South axis crossing the city
		Location, and function as a transit hub, bring together locals, non-locals and tourists Mostly related to unfocused interactions
Symbolic		Known as a hub of diversity Historical importance Emblematic of the neighborhood, place identity Liveliness, 'downtown' feeling
		Popular place for meeting and going out Feels inviting and adequate for 'all publics' One can meet people from any country or culture Long-established identity as an important place of gathering

Noailles Market

One of the most important places of encounter in the neighborhood is Noailles market. Respondents first talked about its commercial function and how it is used for running daily errands. They explained its role in shopping habits and routines: when one often goes to the same butcher, when a merchant recognizes one's face or takes time to chat a little, etc. Respondents said they appreciate those short interactions. For them, shopping at this local market contributes to the feelings of attachment to the neighborhood. Hence, there's an interplay between repeated fleeting encounters and the functional (shopping routines) and symbolic (attachment) dimensions of the market.

I have observed that shopping at Noailles market and in the surrounding streets occurs both within the same community, but also across ethnic, cultural and socio-economic lines. The commercial function of the market and the diversity of shops within a small perimeter foster encounters between merchants and clients of different backgrounds, but also amongst different clienteles.

A short walking distance between one's dwelling and the market was also identified by respondents as an important factor with regards to shopping. Indeed, the area around Noailles market has a mix of uses in proximity to each other (shops, restaurants, residences, etc.), which provides easy access for residents to meet their various needs (functional and spatial characteristics). Also, the area has a compact, human-scale urban fabric, with a predominance of pedestrian traffic, due to the narrowness of streets (physical characteristics). Thanks to those features of the built environment around the market, not only is it practical to be able to combine activities and sustainable (and affordable) to be able to do it on foot, but it is also conducive to encounters and social interactions, because one is always surrounded and close to other people.

On another note, some respondents referred to Noailles market's special atmosphere. Residents, visitors from outside the neighborhood, as well as many tourists come just to stroll around the market and look at all the small shops and boutiques in the surrounding streets. Some people enjoy this bustling, noisy and very lively urban environment; some are attracted by the colorful and sometimes exotic streetscape. However, going to the market is not interesting for those who do not like crowded, tight spaces or high level of activity and noise, as it can be a stressful experience.

Regarding the social function of Noailles market, Mai-Anh said it is a place of mixing between cultures, as well as between older and younger generations.

For Amina, the market can also answer people's needs to socialize and alleviate loneliness:

> "The main place of the neighborhood is the market. It's the meeting point. If a person has something to buy, or even if she doesn't, she gets out, she goes to the market; because there, she will meet a friend, a neighbor. People are quite isolated, after all. We add to this isolation here an isolation associated with living far from the home country and everything. But the market reminds them quite well of their country"

Historically, and in many cultures around the world, the marketplace has been a central feature of urbanity, gathering all kinds of people together. In the present case, may it be older people who associate it with (lost) traditions, may it be diversity-seekers who like it for its authenticity and warmth, may it be migrants who are reminded of home or may it be curious tourists, people are attracted to the market for its symbolic dimensions.

Beyond purchases and consumption, people also come to stroll along, to see and be in the crowd. In Noailles, the functional dimension of the market as a place of meeting and mixing is reinforced by its spatial dimension: its good location in the city center makes it easily accessible on foot or by public transport also for non-residents and tourists. The physical characteristics of the market and its surroundings (tight urban fabric, pedestrian space) foster contact and social interactions. However, those encounters are mainly brief and superficial, as the conditions are not favorable or comfortable for engaging in longer or deeper interactions: it's noisy and dirty, there is not much space, there is a lot of movement and, furthermore, there is no urban furniture to sit or take a break.

Finally, some respondents said Noailles market is a landmark, a reference point everybody knows, even outside the district. It also acts as an important node:

> "The market is the heart of the neighborhood […] it's what really gives life to the neighborhood, it's what attracts so many people. The neighborhood is like a small village that organizes itself around its marketplace" (Fabien)

Many respondents noted the identity of the neighborhood of Noailles is mainly defined by its market. It is so emblematic, there is even a common expression saying "Noailles, the belly of Marseille". Metaphors used to

describe it (heart of the village, belly of the city) show that Noailles market has a strong identity and an important social function, known way beyond the space of the neighborhood. Going there, one expects to have encounters with all kinds of people, to run into an acquaintance or to witness some interesting urban life scenes. One also knows not to expect a quiet, relaxing moment.
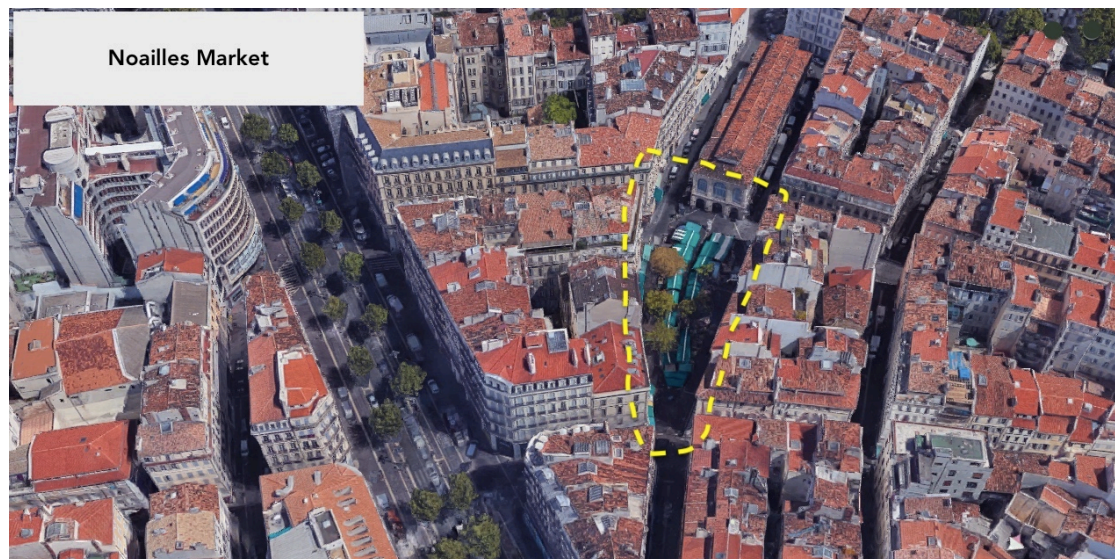

Figure 19: Aerial view of Noailles market (source: Google Earth, 2018)

Dimensions of the built environment and their effects on practices and experiences of living together: Noailles Market

Physical		Dense, organic, medieval urban fabric (human scale) Narrow streets, restricted space (crowded) Pedestrian zone (inadequate for cars and trucks) Nowhere to stop/rest, no urban furniture
		Conducive to contact and social interactions, as one is always surrounded and close to other people Encounters are mainly brief and superficial, as the conditions are not comfortable for engaging in deeper interactions
Functional		Commercial function, shopping errands Diversity of shops Mix of uses or functions in the area around the market: possibility to combine shopping with other activities Strolling around, tourism
		Repeated fleeting encounters linked to shopping routines Encounters between merchants and clients, but also amongst different clienteles (fleeting) Possibilities for encounters across ethnic, cultural, generational and socioeconomic lines (fleeting)
Spatial		Well located in the city center, metro station Easily accessible by foot or public transport In the heart of a dense neighborhood: direct access Proximity of clients (nearby dwellings, restaurants, etc.)
		Brings together locals, non-locals and tourists (through unfocused interactions)
Symbolic		Role of shopping routines in neighborhood attachment Colorful and exotic streetscape, special atmosphere Reminds of foreign country, reminds of traditions Landmark, reference point, heart of the village Emblematic of the neighborhood, strong identity
		Place known for its high potential of encounters (fleeting) with all kinds of people Social function of the market (gathering place) Can answer people's needs to socialize and alleviate loneliness (through unfocused interactions)

<u>Alzacar Library</u>

Another important place of encounter in the neighborhood is Alcazar library. People of all ages and from various social groups go there:

> "The Alcazar is like 'a sociology of Marseille' [...] you have all the different types of library users [...] lots of different people who are together in the same building" (Mai-Anh)

Respondents mentioned both generational, socioeconomic and cultural diversity in the library. It is felt as being inclusive and welcoming for all:

> "Because one can find books in Arabic, one can find books in all languages" (Amina)

The library is mostly a site of fleeting encounters, unfocused interactions or simple co-presence:

> "It's not really mixing, rather, we are together in the same place" (Mai-Anh)

Most respondents referred to the Alcazar as a popular public equipment which caters to the needs of the diverse population (functional dimension). It is described as an attractive and highly frequented place, large enough to host everyone (physical dimension). It is conveniently located and easily accessible (spatial dimension).

Many respondents explained the library acts as a public space in this neighborhood where there's almost no park or free outdoor seating:

> "Alcazar is almost a public space. It's free, it has A/C, there are spaces to sit, you can stay there" (Mai-Anh)

Some respondents also pointed the library provides access to electrical outlets to charge mobile phones and computers to use the Internet, which are very useful for certain people (functional dimension). So, the library is much more than just a place to borrow a book. As it provides various services adapted to the population, it also becomes an important local actor. But beyond the services it offers, the Alcazar is above all an oasis of peace, a quiet retreat away from the hustle and bustle:

> "It's Belsunce's oxygen" (Amina)

In sum, the library's functional, physical and spatial characteristics enumerated above contribute in making it a comfortable and inviting space that provides a favorable and relaxed environment for unfocused encounters. The traditional calm and silence imposed inside the library allow to be in the presence of a diversity of people quietly and peacefully. It is also perfect for those who do not wish to interact actively or directly, but appreciate being in the presence of others while keeping a certain distance. In addition, thanks to the inclusive atmosphere and variety of services offered in the library, almost nobody feels excluded or out of place. Outside the building, the convenient and practical location of the Alcazar in a busy, multifunctional area makes it easy to combine a visit to the library with a variety of other activities nearby. Those characteristics are also conducive to different types of encounters.

On another note, the Alcazar was also described by some respondents as a major landmark in the neighborhood and in the city. Located on Cours Belsunce, it's a reference point everybody knows:

> "[It's] THE neighborhood's big equipment, so we know where to arrange a meeting point" (Laurie)

A few respondents referred to the historical value of the site, as it was an important theater in France in the 19th and 20th centuries. Some are proud of it and conscious of its role in the collective memory, in the identity of Marseille or in the neighborhood landscape. Finally, the iconic and monumental entrance is an important feature and contributes in making it a famous and significant place.

The function of the Alcazar as a landmark and a meeting point is important for encounters, as it brings together all kinds of people, both users and non-users of the library. The architecture of the entrance door (physical characteristics) makes it recognizable and memorable, even for those who never entered inside the building. Its excellent location and the presence of a public space in front make it a practical meeting point (spatial and physical characteristics). Finally, its symbolic characteristics (historic site, Arabic name, etc.) give a positive and inclusive connotation to the place.

Furthermore, some respondents said the Alcazar is among their favorite places in the neighborhood and they're happy to have it. For some, it's an important place in their life, where they often go; to the extent that it plays a role in their sense of belonging to the neighborhood and the wider collectivity. Talking about the services offered by the library to young refugees, Ms Berger explained she is glad 'her' library can help them. It makes
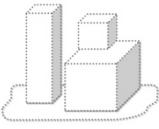
her feel a bit closer or indirectly connected to a very different social group with whom she would otherwise have no contact. This highlights the role of the library as an actor in the neighborhood and in the city.

Symbolic dimensions of the built environment, such as pride and attachment, not only affect how users relate to a place, but also influence how they relate with the other users of that place. For example, one might think, 'we are strangers, we are different, but we both are users of this place that I love, that is dear to me'. In that sense, emotions and meanings associated with a place can mediate encounters occurring in that place. The outcomes can be positive, such as valuing commonalities over differences, wanting to meet and mix with other users and promoting sharing across lines of difference. But the outcomes can also be negative if for example there is disagreement or conflict between different social groups over the use of space. Since some users are emotionally involved, they are likely to care or be protective of the place.

*Figure 20: Aerial view of Alcazar library (source: Google Earth, 2018)*

Dimensions of the built environment and their effects on practices and experiences of living together: Alcazar Library

Physical		Large enough to accommodate everyone Large sidewalks of Cours Belsunce in front of library Architectural value of the entrance door, attractive Comfortable, inviting space
		Favorable environment for unfocused encounters Recognizable and memorable meeting point Outside space in front of building entrance is favorable to both focused and unfocused interactions
Functional		Popular public equipment Offers various services, caters to diverse needs, inclusive Free, indoor, airconditioned, quiet space Proximity to other functions (commercial, residential, etc.) Possibility to combine visit with shopping, eating out, etc.
		Generational, socioeconomic and cultural diversity of users Mostly a site of fleeting encounters, unfocused interactions or simple co-presence Calm and silence inside the library allow to be in the presence of a diversity of people quietly and peacefully
Spatial		Conveniently located in the city center Easily accessible by foot or public transport Located on a busy street: high level of circulation of people Practical meeting point
		Accessibility, and function as a meeting point, bring together all kinds of people, both users and non-users of the library
Symbolic		Oasis of peace, quiet retreat away from hustle and bustle Landmark, reference point, iconic, part of the landscape Historic site, Arabic name: inclusive and positive connotation Pride, place attachment
		Favorable and relaxed environment for unfocused encounters Feeling of connection with other users Emotions and meanings attached to the place mediate social interactions happening there

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

Through this research, I have tried to understand how the built environment influences and mediates practices and experiences of living together in diverse neighborhoods. To articulate an answer to this multifaceted question, I have looked at four dimensions of the built environment, namely the physical, functional, spatial and symbolic dimensions. In this concluding section, I will first summarize the respective significance of each of those four dimensions. Then, I will come back to the research question by presenting and discussing the core findings, and connecting them to some theoretical concerns, as well as more practical avenues. Finally, I will open a discussion on inclusive and egalitarian narratives of living together in diverse cities.
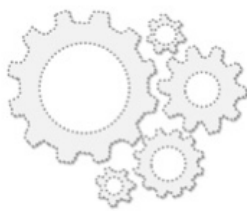
Physical dimension of the built environment
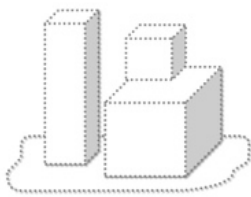
From the analysis of general patterns of coexistence and encounter in the neighborhood spaces, I have seen that density, physical proximity, crowdedness and omnipresence of people close by might emphasize one's choice (or need) to keep a polite distance with others. On the other hand, pedestrian-friendly streets, human-scale architecture and a tight urban fabric are favorable to visual exposure to difference and passive observation, because one's window or balcony is at an adequate distance to see people passing by. Also, the fact that the local urban fabric encourages or not car circulation influences the level of use (probability and length) of streets and sidewalks as a space of encounter and meeting.

However, in cases where a space is appropriated by a specific social group, the compactness of the surrounding urban fabric can exacerbate this space's image of being closed and exclusive in the eyes of 'outsiders'. On another note, lack of green spaces, parks, public benches to sit on, rest or take a break, or just inviting/comfortable public spaces in general, might impair or limit older people's use of public space or their outdoor sociality. Finally, a built environment with diverse physical characteristics (various typologies of buildings, various sizes of dwellings, shops, public spaces and streets, etc.) might accommodate more fully and inclusively the diversity of needs and preferences of the population.

The analysis of a promenade/paseo showed that spacious and shaded sidewalks can comfortably host a variety of uses (restaurant terraces, outdoor shop displays, street performances, etc.). Coupled with limited car traffic, those physical conditions make it inviting for diverse types of people to stroll around, relax and spend some time there, while also facilitating conversations. The analysis of an outdoor market showed that tightness of space and physical proximity encourage social contacts, which generally stay brief and superficial, as the conditions are not adapted to longer or deeper interactions. Finally, the analysis of a public library showed that a large, comfortable, air-conditioned, quiet and free access space can be felt as inclusive and hence facilitate the relaxed co-presence of a diversity of people. Also, the exterior design of a building and its entrance door, as well as the outdoor space in front of the entrance, can contribute in making it a popular meeting point and space of encounter for both users and non-users of said building.

Functional dimension of the built environment

From the analysis of general patterns of coexistence and encounter in the neighborhood spaces, I have seen that the presence of a diverse mix of uses or functions can serve better the wide array of needs and preferences of the population. This mix also generates passage of different people with various purposes, and whose paths are crossing each other. For residents, this functional mix can make the neighborhood feel like an (almost self-sufficient) village. In addition, visual exposure to diversity and more deliberate observation (people-watching) are easily done in commercial streets (especially those with terraces), as well as in areas where residential and commercial functions are mixed.

More specifically, public schools are important places of encounter and mixing across lines of difference. Similarly, affordable language schools for all age and ethnic groups are important to overcome the language barrier. The commercial function and the context of business or trade can also be important bridges across difference. Specialty and ethnic shops provide places where different people can meet and come together thanks to a common need or interest. Finally, religious institutions and cultural associations are also important places of encounter. On another note, in cases where a space is appropriated by a specific social group, the use to which this space is put by this group (from simple gatherings to drug traffic hub) influences social interactions happening in and around that space.

The analysis of a promenade/paseo showed that the presence of a mix of uses and of commercial diversity attract many different people. The resulting liveliness and popularity of the space stimulate its use for strolling, seeing and being seen. The analysis of an outdoor market showed that short and repeated interactions happening during shopping routines are important for residents' feelings of attachment. Similarly, these can answer people's need or wish for light socialization and alleviate loneliness. Also, the commercial diversity and the mix of uses around the market generate encounters between merchants, different clienteles, neighborhood residents and tourists. Finally, the analysis of a public library showed that, beyond books, such a semipublic space can provide various services adapted to the population, making it feel inclusive and welcoming for all. At the same time, it allows to be in the presence of a diversity of people quietly and peacefully.

Spatial dimension of the built environment

From the analysis of general patterns of coexistence and encounter in the neighborhood spaces, I have seen that the proximity of a neighborhood to the city center brings high volumes of people, as well as a diverse crowd, due to the concentration of a variety of functions within a relatively small perimeter. Coupled with an easy accessibility on foot or by public transport, those spatial characteristics of a neighborhood might contribute in making it feel open, anonymous, and porous or permeable. Spatial attributes, such as proximity, accessibility and openness might make it more adaptable to various types and levels of outdoor sociability. In cases where a space within a neighborhood is appropriated by a specific social group, the location of this space at the center or at the periphery of said neighborhood might affect the extent to which this space is felt as being closed or exclusive, or still open to everyone.

The analysis of a promenade/paseo showed that its location in a mixed-use area, with abundant public transport connections (tram, metro, bus), couples its function of leisure (shopping, strolling, etc.) with the function of transit hub within the city's transport network. This brings together different users in the same space, who have different speeds (and purposes) of circulating, thus allowing for different types of encounters. The analysis of an outdoor market showed that its location in a mixed-used area, in proximity of dwellings and other uses, provides easy access for residents to meet their needs within walking distance, while also making it practical to combine shopping with other activities. Altogether, this encourages a variety of social interactions in

the local space. Finally, the analysis of a public library showed that its easily accessible location contributes in making it an inclusive space, while also reinforcing its function as a meeting place.

Symbolic dimension of the built environment

From the analysis of general patterns of coexistence and encounter in the neighborhood spaces, I have seen that meanings attached to places influence people's expectations about social interactions in and around those places. In cases where a space is appropriated by a specific social group, the perceptions of this space by 'outsiders', along with associated feelings and emotions, such as exclusion or fear, affect social interactions happening in and around that space.

The analysis of a promenade/paseo showed that its high level of circulation, resulting from its double role as place of leisure and place of transit, makes it feel like an open, unappropriated territory, and thus inclusive and welcoming for all. The analysis of an outdoor market showed that its reputation and strong, emblematic identity attract different types of users, who, going there, expect to find a lively, chaotic atmosphere, as well as encounters with all kinds of people. Finally, the analysis of a public library showed that the esthetical and historical value of the site and building contribute in making it a landmark and a shared reference point. Meanings and feelings associated with a place, such as pride and attachment, can influence how people relate with other users of that place. For example, it can make them feel closer or indirectly connected to users from another/different social group.

More than a backdrop, and beyond urban design

This research has explained how the built environment affects social behavior and is more than just a backdrop to people's lives (Butterworth, 2000). It has shown that in contexts of urban diversity, the local built environment is indeed one of many factors mediating and influencing encounters and coexistence.

Concerning the role of the physical dimension of the built environment, I have discussed the importance of features such as density, comfort, as well as pedestrian-friendly spaces. While it's easy to understand how these last two can foster outdoor sociability, the effect of density on social interactions is more complex, as it can be both positive and negative. Density can indeed

encourage social contacts, but past a certain level, the space can be felt as too crowded or tight, and people might no longer wish or feel at ease of staying and engaging in conversations longer than simple greetings. As there isn't such a thing as a perfect or ideal urban density, this shows the interest of having a variety of space typologies and sizes, as well as those especially valuable spaces of retreat (Rishbeth et al., 2018) within the denser, bustling urban environment.

As for the role of the functional dimension of the built environment, I have focused mainly on the presence of a mix of uses or functions, that can answer the wide array of needs of a diverse population. Among the four, the functional dimension might in fact be the one with the most influence on practices and experiences of living together. The use(s) or function(s) of a space is what brings people together, it's their primary reason or purpose for being present in that space. It also has a strong relation with the types of encounters happening there, as some functions predispose to different types of social interactions (think of school yard versus gas station, for example). However, the mediating role played by the use or function of a space is hard to isolate from the space's location, but also its location in relation to other uses or functions.

Regarding the role of the spatial dimension of the built environment, I have focused mainly on features of proximity and accessibility, which also links to more general questions of mobility and scale. Openness and easy access to a space by means of walking or public transport makes it inclusive and promotes multiple and varied encounters with diversity. On the contrary, distance and restricted accessibility entails exclusion of certain portions of the population, which affects potential encounters of (and with) those people.

Concerning the role of the symbolic dimension of the built environment, I have discussed the importance of meanings attached to places as fundamental mediators of encounters and social interactions occurring in and around those places. May they be individual or collective, those meanings are often associated with emotions towards those places, which altogether underpin and shape social behavior (Stedman, 2003). As encounters themselves also generate various emotions, there is an interplay between those two emotional responses (i.e. responses to places and responses to encounters).

Overall, this shows the manifold, subjective and unpredictable nature of encounters (Wilson, 2016, p.14-15), and thus explains the difficulty of establishing causality and isolating the influence of the built environment. Other mediating factors, like individual biographies, public discourses in the

media, etc. (Schuermans, 2018, p.9) have a joint (and evolving) influence, which is hard to disentangle from the role of the built environment. Furthermore, this thesis has studied unfocused interactions happening in public and semipublic spaces of neighborhoods, but those happen alongside focused interactions in other spaces, which influence the former as well.

The recurrent use of expressions such as 'might be', 'possibly', 'most often', etc. in this thesis reflects the plurality of attitudes towards encounters, the variety of modes of coexistence in cities, as well as the diversity of relations between social behavior and the surrounding built environment. It's not being vague, rather it tries to maintain an inclusive and nuanced perspective, to avoid reductive and normative assertions, and to represent the different yet equally valuable voices.

The people-centered, bottom-up approach used in this thesis, as well as the focus on micro scale and everyday experiences, is not commonly found in mainstream practices of built environment professions (Rishbeth et al., 2018, p.39). Indeed, outside academia, the physical dimension of the built environment is most often dealt with by disciplines like architecture, and landscape and urban design, whose main concerns are esthetical and technical. As for the functional dimension of the built environment, it is generally dealt with by urban planners, through regulations on land uses. Their main concerns are land management and (re)development. The spatial dimension of the built environment is also taken up by planners, but more specifically by transport planners and engineers, whose main concern is most likely to be efficiency. Finally, the symbolic dimension of the built environment is hardly considered by any discipline, except when it can be utilized for branding strategies. Similarly, social questions in general are often dealt with indirectly or considered last.

I support the plea of Rishbeth et al. (2018) for more interdisciplinary work between built environment professions and social science disciplines. In that sense, the methodology and findings from the present research can inform practices of built environment professions in contexts of diversity, well beyond mere urban design. Planners and other professionals involved in diverse neighborhoods can actively contribute to more equal and socially just cities (Fincher et al., 2014, p.47) by developing their intercultural competencies (Rishbeth et al., 2018, p.38), and by valorizing those "alternative imaginaries" of living together enacted by local social movements, as well as by mundane everyday conviviality between neighbors (Fincher et al., 2014, p.24).

Findings from the present research indicate that egalitarian and inclusive narratives of living together could be based on acknowledgement and respect of the plurality of needs and preferences about socialization and mixing. Such narratives would also recognize that coexistence in diverse cities involves everybody equally and shouldn't impose more adaptation work to some social groups over others (be those groups defined by ethnicity, culture, religion, language, class, gender, sexual orientation, etc.). Applied to the built environment of a neighborhood, those narratives would entail an assessment of its different dimensions, asking who gets excluded from certain spaces and how we can collectively change that.

Father and children, Belsunce

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Mots clés

(vivre-ensemble)
(environnement bâti, cadre bâti, aménagement, urbanisme)
(sentiment d'appartenance, attachement)

Mise en contexte

Je suis une étudiante québécoise. J'étudie les quartiers Belsunce et Noailles à Marseille. Je m'intéresse à savoir comment les gens vivent ensemble dans la diversité. Mon projet de recherche porte sur les pratiques et les expériences du 'vivre-ensemble' dans les quartiers urbains où règne la diversité. Étant moi-même urbaniste de profession (au Québec), je m'intéresse au rôle que peut jouer le cadre bâti/l'aménagement urbain sur les dynamiques du 'vivre-ensemble'.

L'entrevue comporte donc 2 grands thèmes : les questions portant sur la diversité et la cohabitation ; ainsi que les questions portant sur le quartier à proprement parler (Belsunce et Noailles), c'est-à-dire le quartier dans sa forme physique, l'espace, l'architecture, etc.

Vous pouvez répondre aux questions soit pour Belsunce, soit pour Noailles, soit pour les deux, mais en précisant, autant que possible, duquel vous parlez. Je vous invite également à répondre aux questions selon votre point de vue personnel, vos observations, vos expériences vécues. Enfin, sentez-vous totalement libre de répondre brièvement à certaines questions et plus longuement à d'autres.

(questions potentielles, dans le désordre)

Quartier

Cela fait combien de temps que vous vivez dans le quartier/avez un commerce dans le quartier ?
Qu'est-ce que vous aimez dans ce quartier ?
Qu'est-ce que vous n'aimez pas dans ce quartier ?
Avantages/désavantages
Comment décririez-vous le quartier ? son identité ?
Quelles sont les frontières du quartier ?

Quels sont les points de repère les plus importants ?
Quels sont vos lieux favoris ?
Quels sont les lieux que vous n'aimez pas ?
Que pensez-vous de l'architecture/des bâtiments du quartier ?
Que pensez-vous des rues du quartier ?
Que pensez-vous des lieux publics, parcs, places publiques du quartier ?
Que pensez-vous des commerces dans le quartier ?
Que pensez-vous des transports dans le quartier ?
Routines quotidiennes : quels sont les lieux que vous fréquentez tous les jours/pour vos routines quotidiennes ? (ou les chemins que vous empruntez)
Est-ce que vous sentez que vous avez un sentiment d'appartenance au quartier ?
Est-ce que vous souhaitez rester dans le quartier ? Ou vous aimeriez changer de quartier ? Pourquoi ?
Y a-t-il tout ce dont vous avez besoin dans le quartier ? Quel genre d'espaces/de lieux manque-t-il ?
Y a-t-il des lieux dans le quartier où vous ne vous sentez pas en sécurité ?
Quels sont les lieux dans le quartier où vous vous sentez 'à la maison' ?
Quelles activités vous font sentir 'à la maison' ?
Si vous pouviez changer quelque chose dans le quartier, ce serait quoi ?

Diversité

Comment les gens ici vivent avec la diversité au quotidien ?
Comment se passe la cohabitation ?
Comment trouvez-vous l'expérience de vivre avec autant de gens de différentes communautés/autant de diversité ?
Est-ce que les gens se mélangent/se parlent ? ou est-ce qu'ils vivent plutôt côte à côte/en parallèle ?
Est-ce différent d'une génération à l'autre ?
Quels sont les lieux où se rencontrent les différentes communautés ? Quelle forme cela prend-il ?
À quels moments ou dans quels lieux les gens des différentes communautés/origines se mélangent entre eux ?
Y a-t-il de la solidarité entre les différentes communautés ?
Quels sont les lieux ou les moments où cette solidarité s'exprime ?
Participez-vous à des activités dans le quartier ? religieuse, loisir, sportive, communautaire, bénévole, associations, etc.
Diriez-vous que vous rencontrez davantage de gens d'autres communautés en faisant vos routines quotidiennes, épicerie, etc. ? ou en participant à des activités en particulier ? Où et quand vous mélangez-vous avec des gens des autres communautés ?

<u>Key words</u>

Living together
Built environment, urbanism
Sense of belonging

<u>Context</u>

I am a student from Quebec. I am doing research on the neighborhoods of Belsunce and Noailles. I am interested to learn about how people live together with diversity. I want to learn about practices and experiences of 'living together' in diverse neighborhoods. Since I am an urban planner (in Quebec, where I come from), I want to know what role the built environment and the urban landscape can play in regards to the practices and experiences of 'living together'.

(potential questions, not in order)

<u>Neighborhood</u>

Since when have you been living/doing business in the neighborhood?
What do you like in the neighborhood? What do you dislike?
Advantages/disadvantages
How would you describe the neighborhood? its identity?
What are the neighborhood's limits/frontiers?
What are the most important landmarks in the neighborhood?
What are your favorite places? What are the places you don't like?
What do you think of the architecture/the buildings in the neighborhood?
What do you think of the streets in the neighborhood?
What do you think of the public spaces, parks, squares in the neighborhood?
What do you think of the shops in the neighborhood?
What do you think of the transports in the neighborhood?
Daily routines: what are the places where you go everyday/for your daily routines? (or the paths you take)
Do you feel that you belong in the neighborhood? Do you have a sense of belonging in the neighborhood?
Do you wish to stay in the neighborhood? Or would you like to move to another neighborhood? Why?

Is there everything you need in this neighborhood? What kinds of spaces/places would be missing?
Are there places in the neighborhood where you do not feel safe?
What are the places in the neighborhood where you feel 'at home'?
Which activities make you 'feel at home'?
If you could change something in the neighborhood, what would that be?

Diversity

How do people live daily with diversity here?
How is the coexistence? How do you feel about diversity? How do you experience living with so many different people/communities?
Do the people mix/talk to each other? or they mostly live side by side/in parallel?
Is there a difference between generations?
What are the places where people from different communities meet?
When or where do people from different communities/origins mix together?
Is there solidarity between people of different communities?
What are the places or moments where/when this solidarity happens? What form does that take?
Do you participate in any activities in the neighborhood? religious, leisure, sport, volunteer, associations, etc.
Would you say that you meet more people from different communities while doing your daily routines/groceries, etc.? or by participating in certain (organized) activities? Where/when do you mix with people from other communities?