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Atmospheres and Mobility

An Introduction

Rainer Kazig, Damien Masson, Rachel Thomas

Atmospheres, Mobility: An Implicit Connexion to be Made Explicit

For at least the last fifteen years, research carried out in social science and focusing on movement of individuals and their physical, political, social and cultural dimensions, etc. have strongly contributed to renewing transport studies and to stabilizing the field of mobility. This field, which crosses disciplinary approaches, contributed to the widening of some restrictive perspectives to mobility that would primarily or solely consider displacement (as getting moved from A to B) on the one hand, or, on the other hand, a change of social status within society that would be determined by an environment (developed, social or professional). Mobility characterizes all that exists around displacement and physical movement, may that be infrastructure, relationship, power, spatiality, and so on. More broadly, mobility refers to what makes displacement possible and, reversely, to what displacement makes possible. In that sense, mobility encompasses culture, meaning, representations, bodies and their sensory issues. Meanwhile, the growing interest towards senses, affect and atmospheres in the humanities and social science also contributes to extending the investigations and thematic openings inherent to mobility studies.

Atmospheres refer to the physical qualities of sensory phenomena surrounding human bodies, as well as to the potential to seize them, while being immersed into them. As they also characterize the “pervading tone or mood of a place, situation” (Oxford Living Dictionaries English 2018), atmospheres carry out affect and meaning, and therefore describe not only a material, social or sensory situation, but also our relationship and representations to it. French and German Social Science and Humanities broadly approached atmospheres following two major distinct paths: phenomenological and aesthetical (Augoyard 1995, Griffero 2014, Böhme 2016, Schmitz 2016), ecological and praxeological (Amphoux 1998, Thibaud 2004). British geographers proposed the notion of “affective atmospheres” (McCormack 2008, Anderson 2009) which refer more directly to the tone of a situation that might, on the one hand, emerge from the presence of bodies, but, on the other hand, can also be linked to an idea (e.g. a *neoliberal atmosphere*) that might not necessarily be connected to specific sensory settings, or human presence at all.

We consider atmospheres as a comprehensive approach to situated practices as they articulate the problem of individual-specific ways of doing, perceiving and feeling with that of the sensory qualities of the environments in which they live, act, interact, play... and move. Therefore, mobility opens its scope and focus to issues of movement, motion and motricity, and



considers issues of physical displacement as well as the required motor, sensory and cognitive abilities to perform such an activity. Taking into account these dimensions opens the question of the emotional states and of the modes of attention to the environment, and how these are affected by mobile practices. Atmosphere refers to a qualified space-time (Thibaud 2004), and has an effective power on motion and perception. Indeed, feeling and moving are co-constitutive, and motion is fundamental to feeling and perception, as our bodies sense differences (Gibson 1986, Straus 1992), and, reversely, motion could not happen without sensing. As they qualify the sensory background to any material and social situation, atmospheres contribute to putting individuals on the move – simply consider the moving effect of music on some of the listener’s muscles, on the one hand, and the embodied intensity carried out through mobilized bodies dancing collectively in festive atmospheres, on the other hand. Another, and more subtle example, is the atmospheric power of flows of people, that gives a corporeal order to space, which has to do with rhythm and ‘obvious quasi-choreography’, with which bodies might – or not – attune to use as a resource to act (Goffman 1963, Ryave and Schenken 1975, Bordreuil 2004). Therefore, the subjectivity, corporeity, and positionality of these bodies all contribute to question their (un)ability to such an attunement. Atmospheres are therefore neither carried out through a simple signal, nor experienced using a single sense. Atmospheres are processual, they go along space and time, are characterized by lability, modulation, and relate to – socialized, culturalized, racialized, gendered, etc. – bodily presence. Any atmosphere results from an arrangement between the material, sensorial and social elements that constantly compose, recompose, modulate, or even transform themselves brutally. And mobility – in all its forms and at its different scales – shapes experiences, which are constantly modulated through affects, moods and to the sensory resources of the environment. Motion, and by extension, mobility is therefore a *sine qua non* condition of the atmosphere. Then, taking the environment and the very modes of attention and of relationship to it as a starting point makes the detour by the notion of atmosphere, nonetheless heuristic, but also useful. Indeed, the focus on the sensitive qualities of the environments in which individuals are immersed helps to widen the potential registers of understanding mobility. Moreover, this approach goes beyond an understanding of the environment as a (sensory) container of mobile activities as it necessarily stresses the interplay between sensory configurations and practices. To illustrate, it could be asked: how does the very nature of a pavement, the blinding effect of the morning sun, the void but still reverberant sonic quality of an empty underground station at night, and so on, contribute to the way one might move and experience space and place? Reversely, how does this perceiving and moving act continually reshape the sensory environment? And how does the sensory power of situated bodies and the multiple ways they act contribute to alter a situation? And how then, for example, do moving bodies radiate and affect their environment, might this one be composed and re-composed at the nexus of sensory, human and built dimensions? Therefore, the relationship enacted while moving might be considered as going back and forth between humans and non-human agents forging a constantly renewed environment and its atmospheric-scape.

Bridging Atmospheres & Mobility: Three Challenges

By exploring the overlap between atmospheres and mobility, this special issue of *Mobile Culture Studies. The Journal (mcsj)* asks how atmosphere(s) can contribute to research on mobility, and



vice versa. Numerous studies in the field of mobility research point to the need for consideration of the sensual and experiential (Bissel 2010, Thomas 2010a and 2010b, Masson 2012, Hui 2014, Spinney 2015). Conversely and as indicated previously, research on atmospheres originates in the consideration of movement, both on the conceptual and methodological levels. Therefore, to develop this confrontation by aiming explicitly to use the concepts of mobility and atmosphere in intersection, we highlight the three following challenges.

I Atmospheres on the move

One of the most important interests of mobility studies revolves around their constant attention to meaning and values carried out by mobility, and therefore giving sense to mobile practices, representations, and experiences (Cresswell 2006, Sheller & Urry 2006, Urry 2007, Adey 2009). Among these, sensory experience of mobility has been first investigated and researched in terms of the renewal of the forms of experience in relation to the mobile carrier. Early work on perception shows that the very mode of transportation plays a crucial role on the experience of movement. Erwin Straus (1992) notably indicates how the train transfigured the experience of motion by introducing straight lines which connect distinct places. Straus proposes that this kind of connection catalyses a fundamental shift in the experience of space as it helps the passenger to consider his or her body in the space, not only from a self-centered perspective, but also from an allocentric one (Berthoz 1997). By doing so, the train helped the mundane traveler to experience not only the landscape surrounding the moving wagon, but also an abstract – almost cartographic – representation of the land, as the train follows a human-constructed path that existed in no such form before. In addition to that, Schivelbusch (2014) shows how far experience is shaped by the mode of transportation, when he indicates that the train builds a “mechanized perception”, meaning that experiencing train journeys starts with the technical-scape of the train which consists of the geography of the rail path, the kind of engine of the locomotive, the shape of the wagons, of their windows, their insulation from the environment, and so on. By indicating that, we aim at highlighting that atmospheres of mobility are necessarily shaped by a scape-nexus encompassing environment, geography and technique. In addition to that, work on the experience of travel and of movement clearly showed the contribution of practices, human presence, and of the socio-cultural sensory shaping (i.e. lighting, sounding, etc.) in the production of atmospheres of mobility (Bissell 2010, Masson 2012, Spinney 2015). These works also contributed to designing new research methods, not only mobile, but also atmospheric, as they clearly address the issue of grasping and understanding sensory, felt and affective situations (see part 3 that develops further the issue of methods). Nevertheless, these works on the atmospheres of mobility do not directly address atmospheres as an analytic category and its specific interplay with mobility. Here lies one of the challenges of this encounter: if recent research in mobility studies contributes to show how atmospheres impact on, form and alter the experience of mobility, what is nevertheless the specific contribution of the concept of atmosphere to the analysis of the sensual and affective dimensions of mobility?

On the other hand, the question of the role of mobility in the emergence of atmospheres remains understudied. Works on atmosphere do not always look upon the mobile component of the considered situations, therefore the challenge arises to clarify how mobile practices, situa-



tions, and also places contribute to the formation of atmospheres. This is based on the assumption that the mobility of persons or objects alters the dynamic of the atmospheres of a situation or a place. Therefore, the question of the quality of mobility is asked, and it implies to engage with a micro scale of understanding. For example, while many studies consider on metropolitan, regional, national and transnational scales the harmful consequences of motorized movements, fewer works put into question their effects on the daily lives of pedestrians. In the same vein, we might ask how mobility-oriented development of urban territories influences inhabitants and passers-by perceptions, practices, and social relationships. And as multimodality and fluidity continue to be two of the most important agendas of urban and transport design, the question of the consequences of this model on everyday experience of place remains understudied. How are, for example, multiple logics of speed of flows managed in the same space-time? Here, the simple question of moving on foot, and its articulation to the kind of environment in which it happens, shows how space shaping has not only a direct play on atmospheres production, but also act on everyone's (in)ability to use their body. Through the question of the potential mobile uses of the body, atmospheres appear clearly to act at social and political levels.

Furthermore, mobility contributes to the urbanity of urban settings, as it consists of mixing anonymous individuals and testing their ability to live and act together; it is "a collective management of the risks of meeting others", as Bordreuil (2000) nicely puts it. What is then the contribution of atmospheres in this production of urbanity, and how do these, again, need to be understood as being political? To illustrate, spaces of mobility, and more generally the mobile-driven urban design, organize physical and social proximity, but also come with a risk when it sometimes makes passers-by vulnerable by exposure to others, which can create mismatch, and even collision. Yet, public order is only rarely threatened by these situations of vulnerability, and a certain number of behavioural and perceptive rituals ensures its maintenance by the organization of civil inattention (Goffman 1959, Joseph 1995). Mobility is therefore made possible thanks to a perceptive and social organization of the environment, but how is this organization constitutive of its atmospheres? And how do these atmospheres contribute – in feedback – to the maintenance of this order as they support motion? Recent works on the sensory enigmas related to the development of contemporary urban mobility have shown how diffuse processes of surveillance, security and policies of pacification of public urban spaces may incarnate themselves in multiple affective registers that alter the ways to move and share these environments with others (Thomas, Masson, Fiori & Sanchez, 2014). Precisely, they put us in some "body state" as a state of "effervescence", "disgust", "tension" or "attraction" (Thomas 2014). In this work, "body state" not only describes what is felt or experienced within oneself, but rather a shared conduct, resulting from the interaction between the body, the sensory qualities of the environment and others. These works also contribute to point out that public mobile order is also a moral order, which is notably carried out through the sensory environment. When motion comes as a social injunction, for example in spaces in which loitering is forbidden, or in spaces in which flowing is part of the "hidden transcripts" (Scott 1990), deviance becomes subtly inscribed within bodies, rhythms, speed, and so on. Therefore, the sensory and atmospheric dimensions of mobile space become active shapers of normativity, expected rhythms and choreographies that necessarily exclude certain bodies, and by extension categories of people that might become inappropriate to these specific branded, circulated, and implemented atmos-



pheric orders. Moreover, how to perform bodily agency as the aforementioned processes are embodied, and consequently not necessarily conscious and defensible?

Finally, can atmospheres move? While the possibility of mobility of objects, persons or ideas has often been discussed, little consideration has been given to how atmospheres can be transferred from one place to another, or to how ideal, conceptual atmospheres can be set into place, and with which imaginaries going along. This problem includes the question of the professional conception of atmosphere and its transmission in a built situation. It also includes the question of the dissemination of conceptual models of urban space and of the desired atmospheres these entail. Lastly, at an individual level, it includes the topic of migration and of the mobility of atmospheres as part of the motion of cultures and identity. These objects remain understudied and offer the potential for further research at the intersection of mobility, atmospheres and culture.

II Mobility and atmospheres: a cultural matter

We want to focus in the following on the culturalisation of the research field at the intersection of the research on atmospheres and mobilities. It is slightly different from the challenges we discussed before because it proposes to link it further to a third field of research. With the concept of cultures of mobility, the culturalisation is well established in the research on transport and mobilities (Lanzendorf 2013, Aldred & Jungnickel 2014), whilst it is – besides of conceptual papers that plead for a further consideration of the cultural (Kazig 2013a, Kazig & Masson 2016) – hardly developed in the field of research on atmospheres. The fact that this issue is published in a journal that is associated to the field of cultural studies gives a perfect frame to highlight the interest for a further “culturalisation” of the research on atmospheres that until now did not find expression in empirical research. We want to stress here, first of all, three perspectives to take cultural concerns into consideration, at the intersection of research on mobilities and atmospheres.

Introducing a culturally informed understanding in this field can be useful in order to take into account differences in the experience of atmospheres on the move, a problem that is widely neglected in the existing research. Until now, the majority of empirically based papers are on the contrary oriented on shared experiences (Chelkoff & Thibaud 1997, Kazig 2008, Bissell 2010). However, different authors stress that biography, socialisation, and culture contribute to the development of differentiated sensual dispositions (Löw 2001, Werhahn 2011), with the consequence that atmospheres are not experienced by everyone in the same way. This insight is important for the discussion about the accessibility and the amenity value of public spaces that are, to an important degree, shaped by their atmospheric qualities (Thomas 2005). To focus on this topic does not only mean to advance the research on atmospheres. It also leads to a culturally differentiated understanding of the effects of urban design and urban development on the accessibility of urban spaces, and – by doing so – can contribute to critical urban research in the context of social and cultural diversity.

A second perspective focuses on the construction of identities. It is related to the understanding of mobility as a meaningful practice that contributes to the construction of place and identities. Jensen (2009) developed this research question by linking cultures of movement to the issue of identity formation. He suggests to think the process of identity formation not only



with focus on sedentary practices, but also to consider everyday life mobilities. He also puts forward the political dimension of this perspective, but also stresses the role of experiences in this process. To associate atmospheres to this research question would be very helpful in the way that it allows to qualify as well the emotional dimension of these experiences as the sensual qualities of the environment and their relation. It would contribute to getting a differentiated understanding of the environmental qualities that are at stake in the emergence of mobility as emotional and meaningful practices in the process of the construction of identities. It might concern everydayness, or less ordinary mobilities like leisure mobilities, but also political movements or even ceremonies that very often imply mobile practices and that can all be supposed to contribute to the identity formation.

A further interesting challenge for the culturalisation of the research on atmospheres and mobility consists in linking it with the research on globalisation. A part of the research on cultural globalisation deals with the question of homogenisation of spaces and practices mostly in the urban world (Nederveen Pieterse 2015). The global success of fast-food restaurants is often used as an emblematic illustration of this trend. But it also includes spaces of mobility or mobile practices at different levels like the septicization or aestheticization of public spaces, the re-emergence of tramways and cycling as modes of urban transport or the celebration of international events such as Universal Exhibitions or Olympic Games. To introduce the concept of atmospheres to the research on cultural globalisation means to question its sensual and affective dimension and to get a better phenomenal understanding of this process. It would reveal if and how far the international or global spread of ideas and concepts of urban practices goes along with the emergence of similar sensual qualities and affective states at different places, and really means a process of homogenisation. The introduction of this concept could answer the question if place specific conditions and performances lead, at the phenomenal and experiential level, to the emergence of quite different spaces and practices that are only labelled with the same term. The concept of atmospheres could be useful to get a more humanistic understanding of the process of internationalisation and globalisation. And – to put it the other way round – the link of the research on atmospheres with concerns of globalisation raises, at a general level, the question of the possibilities of the mobility of atmospheres that we mentioned above.

III Mobile and atmospheric methodological engagements

Even if this issue does not focus explicitly on methodological issues, the development of the field of research at the crossroad of research on atmospheres and research on mobilities nevertheless goes along with important methodological challenges. Both fields of research have to deal with “researchable entities” (Büscher & Urry 2009: 99) that are – each in a specific manner – relatively new for social science and need the development of new methods and new research designs in order to establish them as fields of empirical research.

The challenge for the research on mobilities was to develop mobile methods that make it possible to grasp people, objects or information on the move. As mobility studies emerged in social science, they were since the beginning linked to methodological issues and systematically went along with methodological innovations (Büscher & Urry 2009, Büscher et al. 2011). In this context, a variety of methods like go-alongs (Kusenbach 2003), drive-alongs (Laurier 2004), mobile video ethnography (Frers 2007), autoethnographic methods (Wylie 2005) and multi-



method research designs emerged and were discussed. All in all, the still ongoing methodological innovations contributed to the realisation of numerous empirical studies that helped to understand the (im)mobilities of people – that are mainly in the focus of this special issue – as embodied and embedded practices, but without addressing atmospheres and developing approaches that allow to grasp explicitly, and in a differentiated manner, the sensual qualities of the environment.

The research on atmospheres is faced with specific challenges. They are due to their ontological character that is already, at a theoretical level, difficult to describe. Böhme (2001) – drawing back on Schmitz – considers them as half-things [*Halbdinge*], Thibaud (2003) as a medium. The characterisation of atmospheres as medium is quite useful to discuss one important methodological challenge. It stresses the relational quality of atmospheres that consists in linking the sensual qualities of the environment with the individual state of an individual being in this environment. One major challenge for empirical research on atmospheres is thus to capture the state of individuals in relation to the sensual qualities of their environment and, based on this, to understand and to describe at a small scale level how this relation is established and how it changes in space and time. The existing empirical work on atmospheres meets this challenge only to a limited extent. Very often the relational quality of atmospheres is described only imprecisely.

This deficit in the advance of empirical approaches is, to a certain degree, linked to the history of the research on atmospheres. In the English- and German-speaking tradition, it was established initially in philosophy or in human geography and other social sciences in form of conceptual and theoretical writings. As a result, the interest to develop empirical approaches to atmospheres, and a related methodological discussion, was, in the beginning, absent in the research on atmospheres, and emerged only recently (Kazig 2007, Anderson & Ash 2015, McCormack 2015). As already discussed in scientific literature (Adey et al. 2013, Kazig & Masson 2015), the situation is different for the French research on architectural and urban ambiances. Established after all as multidisciplinary approach in the field of research on architecture and urban studies, it went, since the beginning, along with empirical studies and the development of specific atmospheric methods, notably making use of “situated experiments” (Atienza & Masson 2015), like the commented walks [*parcours commentés*] (Thibaud 2001) and their adaptations that were quite important for the development of the French-speaking empirical research on ambiances¹.

At a very general level, two approaches to capture atmospheres can be distinguished. The first one is built on an experimental research design that is established in order to capture the atmosphere in specific public spaces. The above cited commented walks represent this approach best. It is an *in situ* approach that consists, on the one hand, on a combination of methods that allow for capturing the changing state of an individual walking as well as the corresponding changing sensual qualities of its environment. On the other hand, it also develops a framework on how to analyse and to relate the different types of data. Due to this combination of different methods of data collection with a theoretically well-justified framework to relate and to analyse the data, it is possible to capture and to describe precisely atmospheres of public spaces at

1 For a complete view on many methods developed to investigate architectural and urban ambiances, see Grosjean and Thibaud (2001).



a small-scale level. Despite this important capability, commented walks have their limits. One of these limits is due to their experimental character that goes along with the deficit that it is not possible to grasp with these approaches the way atmospheres are “naturally” integrated in everyday life.

More classic research designs, like interviews (Kazig 2013b), observations or participant observations, on the other hand, make it possible to access atmospheres as part of everyday life. However, these approaches very often go along with the above-mentioned deficit to capture the relational character of atmospheres only imprecisely. The sensory qualities of the environment are often described in quite a general manner, and their link to the state of the individuals is not systematically analysed.

This short confrontation of two empirical approaches should serve to underline the necessity to establish a broader methodological discussion about atmospheric methods in order to foster the empirical branch of research on atmospheres. Although this special issue on atmospheres and mobilities does not have a methodological focus, its eight papers illustrate the variety of methods and empirical approaches that are used in this field and can contribute to feeding such as discussion.

The contributions

This issue brings together eight contributions with different linguistic (English, French and German), disciplinary (anthropology, architecture, geography, musicology, sound studies) and conceptual backgrounds. Far from being exhaustive, it illustrates nevertheless a wide variety of approaches and research questions at the intersection of mobility studies with research on atmospheres.

The issue follows a path in three movements. It starts with three contributions, grounded upon sensory anthropology backgrounds, and dealing with sonic atmospheres, soundscape and music. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork, **Birgit Abels'** paper focuses on musical atmospheres of an annual cultural festival – the *Regatta Lepa* festival – of the sea-nomadic Sama Dilaut community in Malaysia. The event is characterised by a specific gong music that is performed on board of the moving boats of the Sama Dilaut and that wraps the site of the festival in a thick cloud of sound. Abels illustrates with her paper – that is built on the conceptual background of the German approach of the New Phenomenology – the analytical strength of the concept of atmospheres to make tangible the interconnectedness of music, mobility and the holistic and inclusive experience of this place making musical event. Besides a detailed exploration of this dynamic process, the paper can be considered as a fundamental contribution for the understanding of music as a place-making practice.

Patricia Jäggi's article looks into the transmission of sonic atmospheres through international radio broadcasting, and its social, cultural and sensory roles. Constructed both on German-speaking and French-speaking bodies of research on atmospheres, this paper puts this concept in relation with the German concepts of *Anmutungsqualität* and of *Gefühlstönung*, that are common in history of radio research. This conceptual comparison shows the importance of using atmospheres to understand the aesthetic relationship to radio, as this concept allows to understand both aesthetics of production and of reception, which the others do not. Using a combination of methodologies involving sensory ethnography, Jäggi develops an approach



to radio that shows how radio making and editing is not only a matter of signal and message creation and circulation, but also a question of atmospheres spreading. Moreover, she connects atmosphere making and perception with a cultural understanding of their power, as they contribute to identity building by showing how the radio programs sound 'Swiss'. In doing so, this paper finally indicates how radio might act as an atmospheric carrier that could enact cultural mobility using the circulation of identity through specific sounds, noises, prosody etc. and how such an identity carried through this sonic media is culturally meaningful as it works as the mediator of cosmopolitanism.

Agata Stanisz proposes the third contribution on sound. Also drawn on an anthropological background, this paper shifts from traditional sonic ethnography by being built upon a device that intersects heuristic and aesthetic stakes. Indeed, Stanisz gives a comprehensive depiction of what the life of transnational truck drivers in Europe is, especially in sensory terms. In so doing, she focuses on body uses and states, place and home-making, dwelling on the road, each of which goes along with specific noises: linked to the machine, to the goods, to the others, to the self, etc. This specific soundscape seems to be characteristic of this specific life-on-the-road, and Stanisz shows its social, cultural, and historical meanings. This research also shows the methodological benefits of surveying atmospheres using an anthropological methodology (worded by the author as combining 'thick description and deep listening') that is neither based on experiments or measurements, nor using interviews, but rather prefers immersion, length and participant observation, therefore allowing to show the interplay between atmospheres and dailyness. And, as the latter is understood within the multiple (social, cultural, economic, historical) contexts of the specific form of translocality known by the truck drivers she went with, this paper finally shows how atmosphere research that goes beyond the sole description of the sensory environment contributes to strengthening the sensory turn within social sciences.

The volume continues with two papers that both take into consideration the positionality of subjects, and its stakes when it comes to show that sensory and mobile encounters are socially differentiated, although with quite different research questions. The paper by **Samantha and Catherine Wilkinson** addresses mobilities of young people and their drinking habits in the context of their night-life activities. It takes into consideration the time they pass in means of transport, as well as the time they pass in bars and club spaces. Building on a qualitative multi-method research design, the authors work out how the atmospheres are a kind of resource that fosters their night-life activities in different ways. Whilst traveling and drinking in buses or taxis, they create shared enjoyable atmospheres that contribute to transform these moments of mobility into a constitutive part of their night-out. In the club spaces, the atmospheres created by light, music and their drunken bodies push the young people and make them dance and move.

The link of atmospheres with mobility is quite different in the paper by **Nora Scholtz and Anke Strüver**, and focuses on the mobility of homeless people and their experience of the *Reeperbahn*, the famous entertainment and red light district of Hamburg, which is, at the same time, an area of visible homelessness. Scholtz and Strüver show in their paper how the homeless people experience the *Reeperbahn* as a place that is differentiated in specific atmospheres which appear more or less inviting for them to move through, to stay and to sit down. The atmospheres are for the homeless people, to a large extent, existing qualities of the area that contribute



to structure the space at the level of its experience and its amenity value. On the other hand, the authors also show in a smaller part of their paper how the homeless people contribute to the emergence of a specific atmosphere in the public space of the *Reeperbahn*. It is either an atmosphere of intimacy that helps them to create time-spaces for private activities within this public space of mobility, or a terrifying atmosphere in order to keep passers-by at distance. The specific contribution of this paper is to put explicitly forward the question of power in the discussion about atmospheres and mobilities.

The last three articles address urban policies and design that have a take on mobility, or on atmospheres, and interrogate the effects of their localised ‘translations’ on lived experience of place. **Patrick Naef** talks about setting up “encounter zones” in Western Switzerland, and more particularly on the role these “encounter zones” play in terms of social cohesion in the neighborhoods in which they are located. He shows how this device promotes greater ownership of spaces and neighborhoods by pedestrians, because it appeased the ambiances. Through an anthropological survey (combining observations of pedestrian practices, interviews with architects and users, analysis of planning documents) on two study areas – the “Versoix-center” area located in the old derelict area of the train station and the area of the lively “Alt” district of Freiburg – he shows that the success of these areas is less dependent on the degree of safety it provides for pedestrians than their ability to attract the public by offering a quality atmosphere. Thus, besides the design of the “encounter zones” or the existence of urban furniture like public benches, green spaces, fountains... it is the ability of the ambiances of these areas to create an impression of conviviality and fluidity that attracts the pedestrian and allows its anchoring.

The reflection of **Emmanuelle Lenel** is related, even if the scale of work differs. She is interested in the effects of the urban revitalization policy on the practices and the experiences of two neighborhoods in Brussels: the Heyvaert district and the Vieux Molenbeek district. The operations aim to improve the living environment and revolve around both the quality of public lighting and roads, the enhancement of the architectural heritage and the establishment of green spaces. But they also upset the spatial configuration of these neighborhoods, since it is now a matter of making them open neighborhoods, connected to central districts. What interests Emmanuel Lenel then is to grasp the way in which these physical and environmental upheavals experience, that is to say, transform positively or negatively, the mobility of the inhabitants. The term “felt mobility” is at the center of her analysis and its methodological apparatus. What it shows is that, ultimately, each ambiance shapes proven closure or opening, release or commitment, ease or discomfort, etc. But these experiences are not just personal or subjective feelings. As shared feelings, they are resources on which everyone relies to manage their relationship to their environment, its proximity to the other, its tolerance of behaviors, objects or devices considered inappropriate.

Marina Popovic’s article comes from an architectural and engineering background, and questions the thermal experience of ordinary walking in cities, in this case under Madrid’s heavy summer sun. Using an ethological approach, combined with multiple measurement devices, this paper explores the effect of specific climatic events – particularly linked to mist generators placed on footpaths – on pedestrians and the way they walk on streets. In that instance, mobility is addressed as walking routine, and is put into question at a sub-micro scale, called ‘pico’ by the author, in order to understand changes in motion, gesture, posture that even a bub-



ble of mist could provoke. Here, Popovic shows not only that climate has an effect on motion, but also on encounters, as the climatic pockets she investigates act as surprises, that might be searched or avoided, and complexify displacements and interactions. Another contribution of this paper is linked to its ability not only to describe and understand the situations and devices it presents, but also to provide atmospherically-informed design strategies.

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