RESEARCH SEMINAR
STUDIO | URBAN ARCHITECTURE

TRANSITIONAL SPACES

Studies on their role in the city and
their impact on human interaction and behavior

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From research to design

Figure 1. Anderlecht, Brussels, taken by the author, 2020

'There seems to be a public image of any given city which is the overlap of many individual images. Or perhaps there is a series of public images, each held by some significant number of citizens. Such group images are necessary if an individual is to operate successfully within his environment and to cooperate with his fellows. Each individual picture is unique, with some content that is rarely or never communicated, yet it approximates the public image, which in different environments, is more or less compelling, more or less embracing.'[1]

Kevin Lynch, The Image of the City

Figure 2. Anderlecht, Brussels, taken by the author, 2020

[1] Lynch., K. (2014). Image of the city. Boston: Birkhauser, p.46.

ABSTRACT

If the city is comprised of the compilation of a multiplicity of individual images through time as Lynch suggests, the city itself is indeed a physical form in which the evolution of society can be traced. The study of the present urban reality through observations is a primary tool that enables researchers and planers to comprehend trends and changes in society with an ultimate aim of maintaining or even enhancing the liveability of the city for the benefit of the public.

During the first part of the Graduation Studio (P1) my research was focused on the relationship between the living and the working activities within the city. The effect of such a mixed-use urban setting to the residents and workers lives was also examined. It could be claimed that the particular arrangement of a variety of activities in a close proximity, located adjacently or stacked horizontally or vertically within the urban core, can be a factor that attributes liveliness to the streets. Contrarywise the lack of public contact and life on the streets may bring about feelings of fear and unsafety especially after dark. After our site visits and interviews with residents of Anderlecht, we have come to realize this problem as well as the way it can affect people's behavior within the city.

Therefore in my research I am aiming to explore the public life of Anderlecht but most specifically by focusing on the streets, as transitional elements of the city, the linear, necessary urban setting, that facilitates all movements and may comprise of starting points and/or destinations . Understanding the routine of the life on the edge of the street is vital in determining the liveability of a street. One thing is definite, pedestrians have the potential to elevate street life.

INTRODUCTION

Anderlecht, located on the southwest of Brussels, is distinct for its multicultural character. It's location close to the Brussels Midi station is a significant factor that establishes the area as a point of destination for various waves of immigration over the years. This diversity becomes apparent when roaming through the streets.[2] Analyzing the streetscape and the people who occupy it within such multicultural context has been a challenging but at the same time fruitful experience.

Upon our visit in Anderlecht and our onsite analysis through a series of interviews we started to discern a motif according to which, people seem to coexist physically but do not however significantly interact with each other. This hypothesis can be comprehended at a global scale, regardless of the specificity of the site, with the general phenomenon of privatism that characterizes the latest generations. It comes as a consequence of the rapid development of technology but also with the diverse population of the area, comprised of different nationalities and social worlds.

The evolution of technology such as the personal automobile ownership as well as the ability of working from home, aside from easing everyday life it has also limited the necessity of being in socially meaningful spaces. As a result, a great portion of people's lives is spent within the privacy of their home. This phenomenon known as privatism, was unprecedented in the preindustrial city and is closely linked to the personalistic and individualistic feeling of isolating oneself from the masses and withdrawal from participation in the public realm.[3]

Another possible reason for the mere coexistence between the inhabitants of the area is the diversity of social backgrounds and nationalities, which is intensified with the continuous arrival of newcomers. A general observation would be that the fear of the unknown is limiting the interaction between the different social groups.

Figure 3. Anderlecht, Brussels, Rue Heyvaert, taken by the author, 2019

[2] Jackson, E. (2020). Brussels, the beating heart of multiculturalism. [online] France 24.

[3] H. Lofland, L. (1998). The Public Realm, Exploring the city's quintessential social territory. 3rd ed. New Jersey: Aldine Transaction, pp.143-151.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

How does this fragmented society interact? And what is the urban setting in which these interactions take place?
In answering these questions, the understanding of the linear relationship between the individual and the outside world becomes crucial. In my research I would like to focus on the physical articulation of the transition from the private interior to the public exterior space, while at the same time on the transition along the public horizontal length of a street.

What is the role of transitional spaces within the city? How are they demarcated in space physically or symbolically and how do they influence human perception, interaction and behavior?

The aim would be to understand the qualities of these spaces as well as their role in evoking activity or inactivity. These spaces will be selected from different parts of Anderlecht, as I will be taking over the role of the bricoleur, a collector in this case of images of spatial elements found in various locations of Anderlecht. This method is fitting as a wide variety of types cannot be found only on one street of the area. The information to be analyzed in the research shall influence the design proposal in creating transitional spaces that will potentially contribute to the increase of the liveliness and safety of the site.

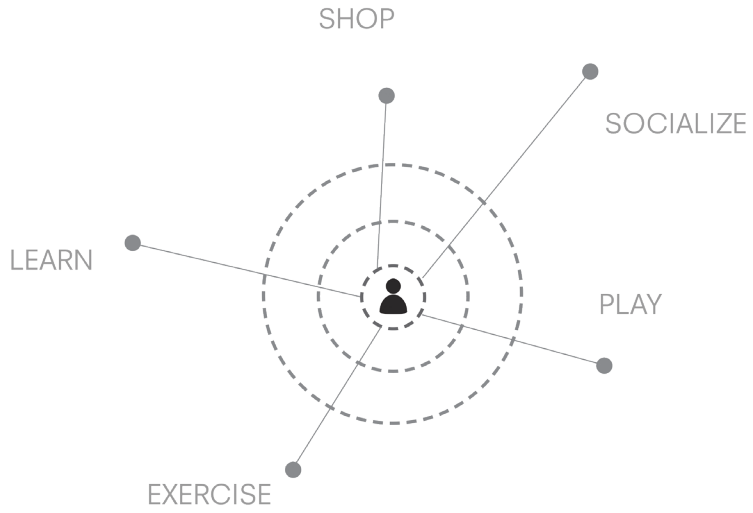


Figure 4. Spatial Behaviour, Diagram

RESEARCH - METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Through the study of transitional spaces of Anderlecht, or else 'interfaces' , the spaces where the private and public realms delineate[4] , I am analyzing the setting of the very starting point of human interactions, with each other and the environment, that take place on the immediate boundary between the two worlds.

From the aforementioned approach it becomes apparent that the research is context led as the geographical definition provides a set of specific conditions.[5] The methodologies and theories undertaken are therefore closely interrelated to this context. The first part of the research is typological and helps to clarify the definition of transitional spaces. This classification is a prerequisite for the distinction of the physical characteristics of these urban elements. The second part addresses the interpretation of the qualities of the defined types. Overall this assessment is following a qualitative research on an emic account meaning that the methodology is structured along my subjective perspective.[6] In addition, my research is interdisciplinary as it depends to a great extent on people's perception and behavior and consequently it is closely connected to the disciplines of psychology, sociology and anthropology.

The research is materialized through the documentation of on-site observations in the form of notes, diagrams about the physical setting but primarily through a typological analysis[7] and categorization of distinctive spatial features of the connection between the façade and the street in different areas of Anderlecht. Such an analysis entails the observation of the differences between the various ways in which the facades meet the pavement in the area of Anderlecht that can enable us to understand the potential similar or different activities that can take place in each case.

The experimentation or testing of the validity of these observations was conducted with the use of visual sociology, a sub discipline of sociology that relies on the visual image as a means of understanding social life. More specifically in my research I focus on a case study, rue Wayez, by following the method of sequence photography and extracting continuous stills from footage taken on this street. This method was appropriate as 'Our experience of the architectural design in an urban space is not a static experience'[8] Furthermore the technique of taking videos with a smartphone was chosen as a more discreet medium for retrieving visual information than photography, with which pedestrians seemed to be disturbed by in certain occasions. Through these sequences, presented in the form of flipbooks, the gradual change in scenery while moving up and down this street becomes apparent. Consequently, one can observe the change in colors and physical objects on the pavement seen from the perspective of the pedestrian as well as their effect on human perception, behavior and movement.

[4] Bobić, M. (2005). Between the edges. Bussum: Thoth, p.70.
[5] Lucas, Ray. n.d. Research Methods For Architecture. London: Laurence King Publishing Ltd.
[6] Ibid, 10
[7] D.Guney, Y. (2007). Type and typology in architectural discourse. Ph.D. Balikesir University Faculty of Architecture.
[8] Heath, T., Oc, T., Tiesdell, S. and Carmona, M. (2012). Public Places- Urban Spaces. Routledge, p.170.

Figure 5. Self-Portrait, Vivian Maier, New York, 1959

The work of Vivian Maier has been a central inspiration for my research. Her work on street photography, a hobby of hers in parallel to her job as a nannie, became known only after her death and has been widely praised and appreciated ever since. Her photos depict the spontaneity of the street life of Chicago and New York during the 1950's and 1960s taken with a camera held at chest height, reassuring discretion towards the public.[9] Similarly, in my attempt to document the street life I used my phone at a similar height and collected continuous images of everything I was coming across while walking along the pavement of rue Wayez.

The human centric approach of the second part of my research can relate to the term praxeology, referring to the logic behind the 'praxis', the action of people.[10] Understanding how physical and symbolic boundaries identified within transitional spaces can affect user's behavior is a key aim. At the same time, it is interesting to note that the various urban types may acquire new identities after use, and it is only through the study of the users' activities that we can find out about it. It is frequently the case that architecture is used in a different way than what it was originally designed for. This fact highlights the reciprocal relationship between space and users.

A distinct challenge of these research methods that inhibits the generalization of the results of the research is the subjective lens under which it is conducted, the geographical limitation to the particular area of Anderlecht but also the relatively limited data collected considering that the research has been conducted by one individual.

[9] Vivian Maier. (2020). About Vivian Maier.

[10] "Praxeology Definition And Meaning | Collins English Dictionary". 2019. Collinsdictionary.Com. https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/praxeology.

DISTANCE

Living in the city, and especially in a multi-cultural city such as Brussels, entails the confrontation with a diversity of people with different cultures, ethnicities and lifestyles. Yet it becomes apparent that there is social distance between them. This distance can be related to the social differences between the residents in the area and their limited cross-cultural interactions. I am interested in analyzing urban social encounters between the users of the city and the setting in which they take place.

The physical urban space can be transformed into a place for social interaction with the contribution of the users. This point, argued by Lefebvre[11], is a different approach that comes as a response to the wide urban literature on the way architecture can define human behavior. The role of the user and the way physical space is perceived is quite significant especially when one considers the variety of ways in which spaces or architectural elements may be used.

THE STREET

Within the wider framework of morphological studies, the spatial form of a city can be distinguished in two categories, the built and the non-built. The built area is generally considered to belong to an owned territory of control while the latter one can be considered as open, public space. It is the city's ***'continuous'*** and ***'most constant element'.***[12] The non-built, also perceived as a set of urban voids, is a spatial category that binds all urban elements together creating the city.

The street is a form of urban void and public space that deserves our attention for study as it enables us to experience the city. It comes into existence with the juxtaposition of buildings that define its edges. It is the space in between the city blocks, a space defined by the activities that frame it. In terms of their morphology they are defined by Rapoport, as ***'more or less narrow, linear spaces lined by buildings found in settlements and used for circulation and sometimes, other activities'***[13]. Furthermore, he introduces three extra aspects that highlight the potential character of the street as social, cultural and educational. With this addition a higher meaning than the mere providing of access to buildings is attributed to the term.

[11] Lefebvre, H. and Nicholson-Smith, D. (1974). The production of space. 3rd ed. Blackwell, p.68.
[12] Bobić, M. (2005). Between the edges. Bussum: Thoth, p.48.
[13] Mehta, V. (2013). The street. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, p.11.

EDGE - SETTING OF TRANSITION

In order to grasp the character of a city, the observation of the different urban elements and scales has a primary role. At the edge between the domain of the individual and the collective the rules of the two different worlds are confronted. The juxtaposition of the private and the public realm as well as the indoor and outdoor space takes place on the street edges that are defined between the street and the city blocks. It's the space where all three scales, of the city, block and house, meet.

In understanding the dynamics of this confrontation between the public and the private firstly a deeper meaning of the terms shall be discussed. Richard Sennett in his book 'The Fall of Public Man', describes the private as ***'the human condition'*** whereas the public as ***'a human creation'***, something that must be learned though one's life. The difference between the social codes call for a different set of behavior but also for tolerance for the other participants in public life.[14]

From one perspective it could be claimed that the city is comprised of juxtapositions of interdependent domains of different scales and characters. A building structure faces another building structure and together they face the rest of the city. The physical relation of the domains can only become visible at the edge. That is frequently the case as the edge is a transformable setting accommodating a gradual transition from one domain to another. Physical changes to that setting are called for due to the change of needs of each spatial realm.[15]

'A private realm calls for a more intimate spirit than a public realm such as the street'[16]
Milos Bobic, Between the Edges

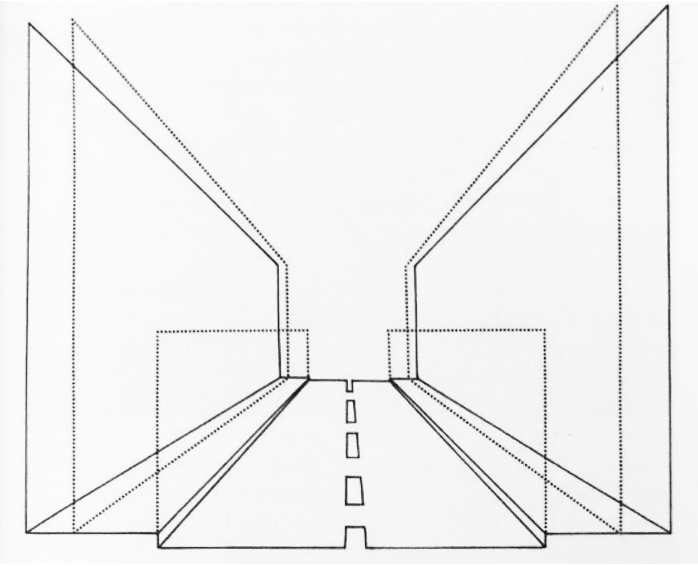


Figure 5. Diagram, On the Edge, Bobic, 2004

[14] Sennett, R. (1977). The fall of public man. 3rd ed. Penguin Books Ltd, p.82.
[15] Bobić, M. (2005). Between the edges. Bussum: Thoth, p.54.
[16] Ibid, 78

APPROPRIATION

'Zooming in on a living cell. A wholly sealed wall would cause the cell to die, as would a totally fluid relation between inside and outside. Porosity exists in dialogue with resistance.'[17]
Richard Sennett, Building and Dwelling

The extent to which one domain penetrates the other may depend on the type of boundary that lies between them but more specifically on the culture of the city in question. As architect N.Habraken best puts it *'We are players: agents who inhabit the environment, transforming it to our liking… with territory we claim.*[18]

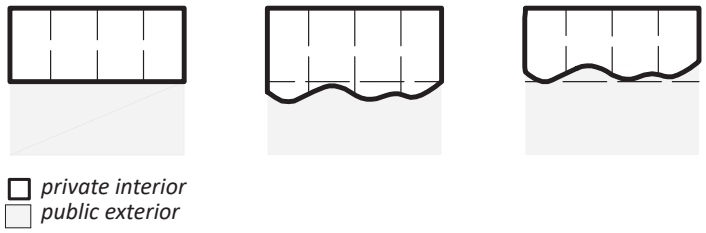


Figure 7. Diagram, Appropriation

In this process of providing gradual transitions from one domain to another, the clear physical demarcation of the boundary becomes crucial. Such action may bring about a balance between the two worlds. The penetrations between the domains can be closely related to the desire of claiming one's territory but also of controlling desirable or undesirable activities of the public. Examples of this behavior of property owners may have more than one goal of providing a pleasant visual image such as with the addition of a low or high hedge, which at the same time might act as a physical barrier, demarcating a private entrance and inhibiting views towards the interior. Similarly, shop owners frequently extend their premises on the pavement, making their products visible to the passersby. In such a case the accessibility of the sidewalk's surface area for the pedestrians is reduced. When such arrangements are taking place in a row, as exemplified in commercial streets, the boundary between the interior shops and the street itself is weakened. When done responsibly by not completely inhibiting the passage of people through the sidewalks and respecting the rules of each municipality, such penetrations may attribute a pleasant street life atmosphere that promotes interaction and liveliness of the streets.[19]

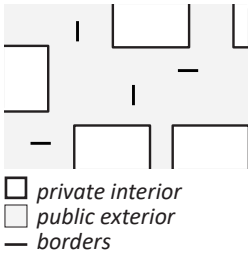


Figure 8. Diagram, Borders on pavement obstructing movement

[17] Sennett, R. (2018). Building and dwelling. 1st ed. New York: Penguin Books, p.220.
[18] Habraken, N. and Teicher, J. (2000). The Structure of the Ordinary. Cambridge (Mass): The MIT Press, p.7.
[19] Bobić, M. (2005). Between the edges. Bussum: Thoth, p.55.

TRANSITION

Physically transitioning from one space to another is proof enough of the presence of oneself within an environment, be it private or public. It comprises one of the ways with which we experience the city. It can be a purposeful action of running errands or even killing time. Individuals are their own decision makers for these movements. Studies on the effect of the built environment on individuals' behavior and specifically on the urban realm have shown however that indeed the urban setting does play a role in the perception of space on a first level and consequently in the relation to the physical surroundings.[20]

The verb 'to transition' within the context of city life has highly mobile connotations and is closely connected to the activity of walking. If seen as a journey through urban space however, within a defined or undefined time frame, a transition between zones might also entail stationary activities. Such examples may include, looking at vitrines, interacting with others or merely stopping before crossing the street.[21]

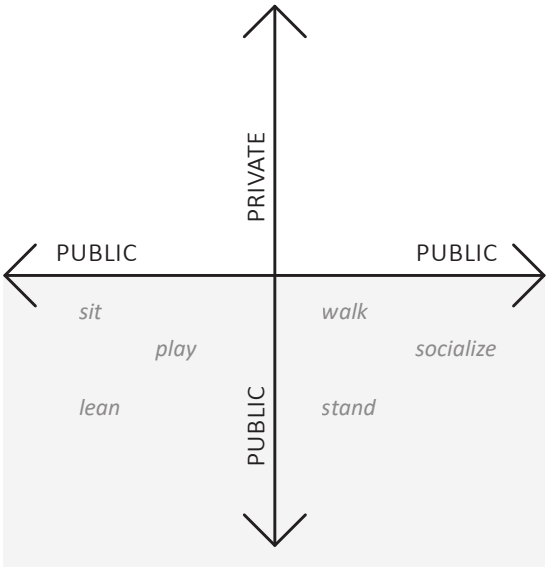


Figure 9. Diagram, Transition from public to private and from public to public

[20] Gehl, J. and Koch, J. (2011). Life between buildings. Washington, D.C.: Island Press, p.129.

[21] Kanellopoulou, D. (2017). Walking and standing in Athinas Street: Encountering pedestrian life in Atehns' historical centre. Ambiances Architectures Urbanites, 3(10), p.6.

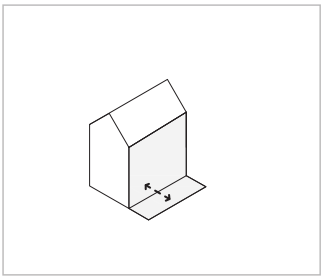
TRANSITIONAL SPACES

'Interface is, per definition, a surface serving as the common boundary of two bodies or spaces, but also a common boundary or interconnection between systems, equipment or human beings. A space or field of transition wherein the processes of interrelations occur.'[22] *Between the Edges, Milos Bobic*

They will be analyzed typologically not only according to their physical appearance but also according to the way there are used by residents and outsiders of the private and public realm accordingly.

Individual interfaces

Configurations that control the relationship between a single building and public space

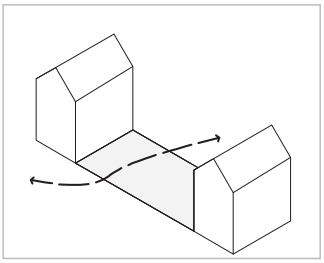


FACADE- PAVEMENT

Figure 10. Diagram, Individual Interface

Collective interfaces

'Communal zones that create an extension of the private domain and an additional layer in the transition between the city and community.'



PUBLIC SPACES
as transitional spaces

Figure 11. Diagram, CollectiveInterface

This research will focus on Individual interfaces as transitional spaces

[22] Bobić, M. (2005). Between the edges. Bussum: Thoth, p.66.

TRANSITION
Walking

Walking is an activity that is central in our perception of the city and thus significant in the process of shaping the urban environment. In some cases, in northern European cities, urban projects promoting walking were developed primarily due to economic purposes but also with the intention of enlivening city centres. By pedestrianizing streets, local authorities aimed at stimulating commercial activity and enhancing public life. Urban planner, Gehl after extensive investigations of pedestrians' behavior, stresses the importance of the variety of activities within the urban framework in intensifying liveability as opposed to merely the physical design elements present.[23]

Philosopher Michel de Certeau in his book 'Practice of the everyday life' characterizes the 'walkers' as ***'ordinary practitioners of the city'***. He stresses their role in structuring urban space as we know it. In a way the series of images the pedestrians are exposed to, are visual fragments, which when put together comprise the full city spectrum for an individual, that might differ from that of another. Their freedom of movement enables them to be independent of a topos, place.[24]

"Their intertwined paths give their shape to spaces. They weave places together. In that respect, pedestrian movements form one of these real systems whose existence in fact makes up the city. They are not localized; it is rather they that spatialize."[25]

According to his theories, a city can be defined as the embodiment of interrelations between elements, physical or not. So much more than when seen as a complete whole, interest can be found in the in-between spaces, the spaces where elements connect. The activity of walking with or without a purpose, 'urban drifting', can be a tool for planners to record, map and understand the city that can help for more fitting future design moves.[26]

'We are finding a tool with which human imagination can begin to mould the city into a coherent drama.'[27] Cullen, 2012

Figure 12. Walking, Smith, 2008

[23] Bobić, M. (2005). Between the edges. Bussum: Thoth, p.55.
[24] Certeau, M. and Rendall, S. (2011). The practice of everyday life. Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, pp.91-110.
[25] Ibid, p.91-110
[26] Daniilidis, A. (2016). Urban Drifting: An Approach to City Comprehension and Mapping. Sociology Study, 6(7), pp.417-435
[27] Cullen, G. (2015). Concise townscape. [Place of publication not identified]: Routledge, p.9.

Gordon Cullen in his article 'Introduction to the Concise Townscape' discuses the ways in which the users of the city can experience the city emotionally, using their senses. His comparison of life along the street to a 'coherent drama' is very inspiring to me. The theatrical and convivial character attributed to the street is striking.

Concerning Optics: This entails the way in which we visually perceive the environment. As pedestrians we experience the city through a 'series of jerks or revelations' that emerge gradually in the horizon as we move along a street. Those series of images might comprise of corners, gates, narrow or wider parts etc. The transition through such spatial phases on a uniform speed plays a significant role in our interpretation of the city and the perception of such action is what Cullen defines as 'serial vision'. As he proceeds, he distinguishes two types of views of the human perspective, the 'existing view', of the immediate front and the 'emerging view' that reveals itself gradually. With this element a cinematic character is attributed, capturing pedestrian's movement through space, observing gradually altering views of the city.

Concerning topos – place: This is closely connected to the way we physically position ourselves within the city and in relation to the surroundings. As such he recognizes this understanding to be of great importance in environmental design. He places attention to the meaning of 'here' and 'there' and the relationship of the individual with the terms and distinguishes two categories, of the known 'here' and 'there' and that of the known 'here' and unknown 'there'. The first one includes transitions such as changing of levels, looking into enclosed areas while the latter be connected to feelings of mystery and anticipation.[28]

Concerning content: With this point, Cullen underlines the detailed physical fabric of cities in the form of textures, styles, colors, scales, styles, character etc. By taking advantage of these features he comes upon a variety of effects including juxtaposition, exposure and intimacy.[29]

[28] Sepe, M. (2013). Planning and Place in the City. 1st ed. New York: Routledge, p.67.
[29] Gibbons, A. (2015). Gordon Cullen's Concise Townscape- Andrea Gibbons. [online] Andrea Gibbons.

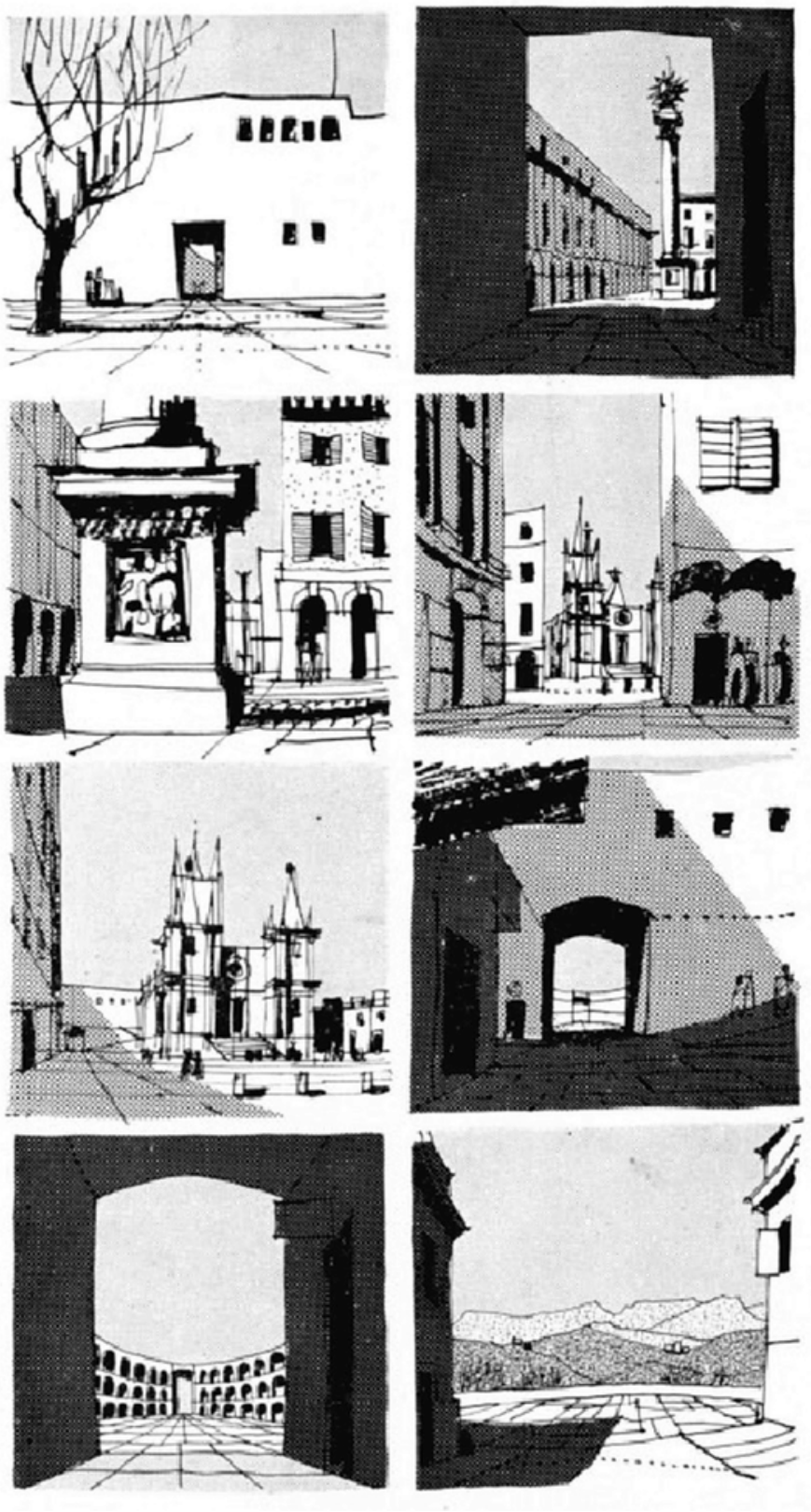


Figure 13. Serial Vision, Cullen, G. , 2015

The essence of observational sequence sketching that Cullen uses to highlight 'serial vision' can focus on textures, colors, edges, routes, boundaries. All such elements are encountered upon one's drifting around the city. The same goal can be achieved with the medium of photography as a quicker means of capturing the life on the street.

Similar effect with the addition of an anthropocentric parameter can be seen in Ralph Rumney's 'Phsychogeographic Map of Venice' of 1957.[30] The photographic collage includes material taken while stalking author Alan Ansen around the city. An additional example is Sophie Calle's 'Suite Venitienne' (1979), where she is following strangers and photographs them around Venice, recording their paths around the city's structure.[31]

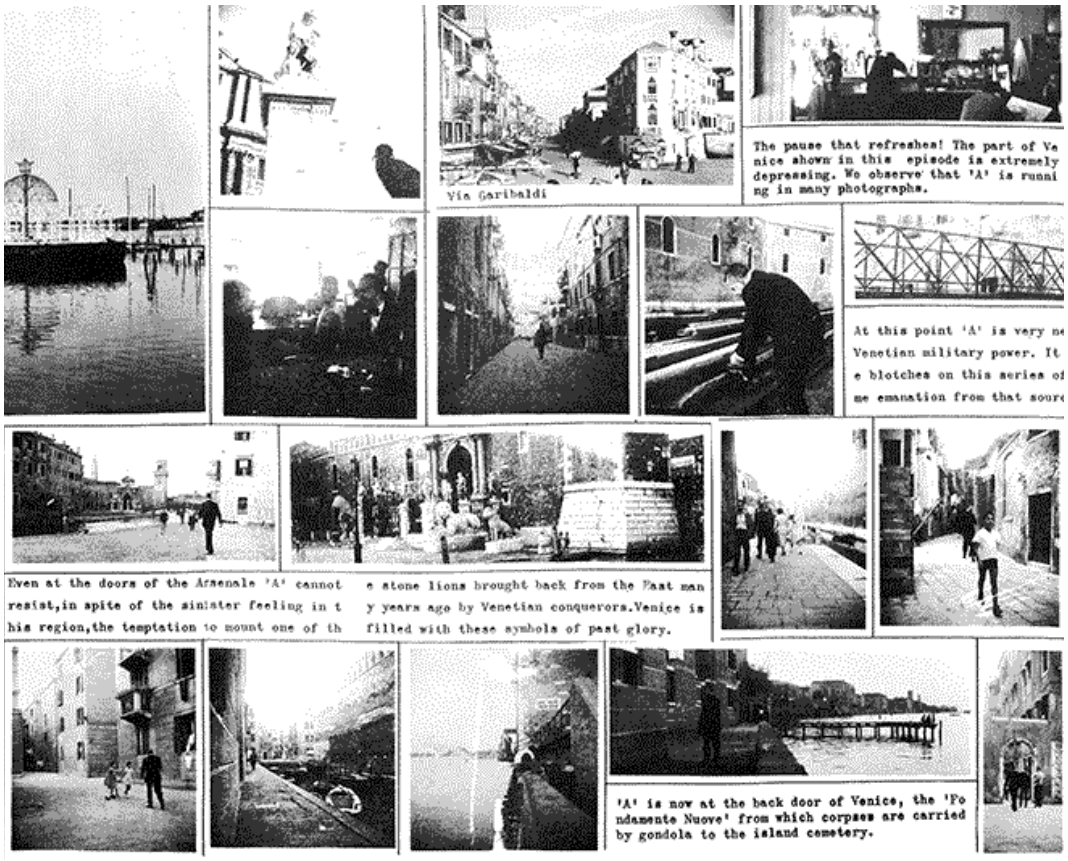


Figure 14. Phsychogeographic Map of Venice, Rumney, R., Venice, 1957

Figure 15. Suite Venitienne, Calle, S., Venice, 1979

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FIGURES

Figure 1-3: Photos taken by the author

Figure 4: Diagram, created by the author

Figure 5: Maier, V. (1959). Self Portrait. New York [image] Available at: https://www.timeout.com/los-angeles/art/living-color

Figure 6: Bobic, 2004, Diagram - On the edge, Between the edges, Thoth Publishers, Bussum

Figure 7-11: Digrams, created by the author

Figure 12: Smith, D. (2018). The art of walking. [image] Available at: https://wallhere.com/it/wallpaper/1096767 [Accessed 16 Feb. 2020].

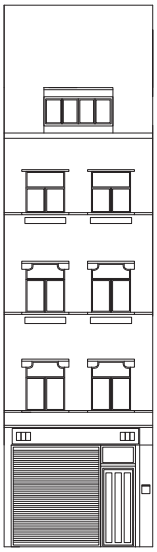
Figure 13: Cullen, G. (2020). Serial Vision. [image] Available at: https://rekabentukbandar.wordpress.com/2008/07/08/lecture-1-week-1/ [Accessed 15 Feb. 2020].

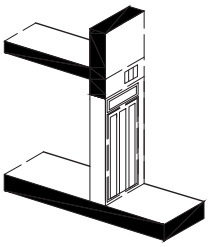
Figure 14: Museodelcamminare.org. (2020). re_iter Ralph Rumney. [online] Available at: http://www.museodelcamminare.org/progetti/re_iter/rumney/rumney_en.html [Accessed 15 Feb. 2020].

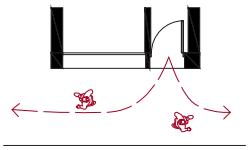
Figure 15: AnOther. (2020). Sophie Calle: Suite Vénitienne. [online] Available at: https://www.anothermag.com/art-photography/7349/sophie-calle-suite-venitienne [Accessed 15 Feb. 2020].

TYPOLOGICAL ANALYSIS
facade

Type 1 | Door



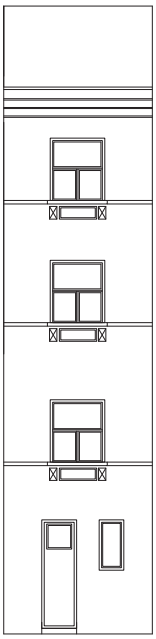


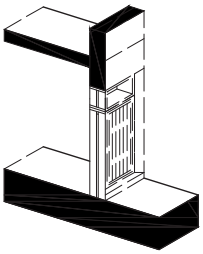


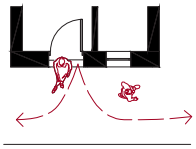
SITTING	LEANING	LOOKING	WALKING	INTERACTING	PLAYING
			✘ entering exiting passing by	✘ talking nodding arguing	

TYPOLOGICAL ANALYSIS
facade

Type 2 | Door with step



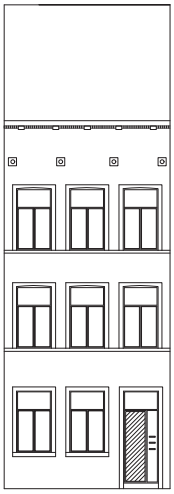


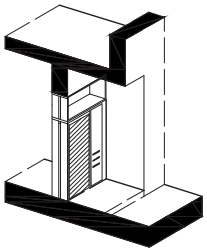


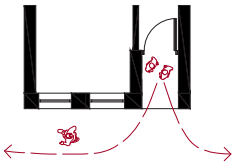
SITTING	LEANING	LOOKING	WALKING	INTERACTING	PLAYING
✘			✘ entering exiting passing by	✘ talking nodding arguing	

TYPOLOGICAL ANALYSIS
facade

Type 3 | Niche



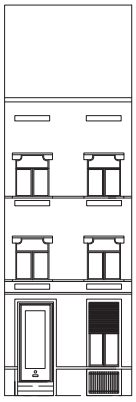


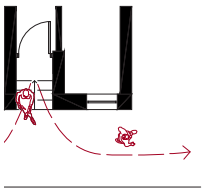


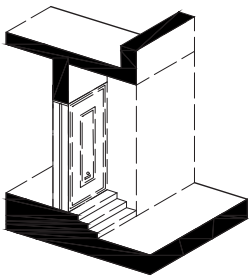
SITTING	LEANING	LOOKING	WALKING	INTERACTING	PLAYING
✘	✘		✘	✘	
waiting for someone protection from rain chatting	waiting for someone protection from rain chatting		entering exiting passing by	talking nodding arguing	

TYPOLOGICAL ANALYSIS
facade

Type 4 | Niche with steps



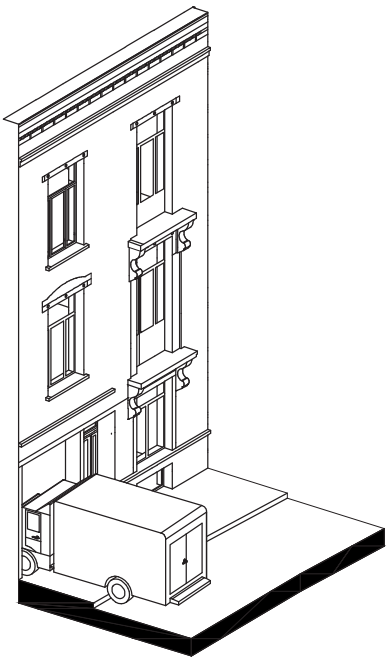


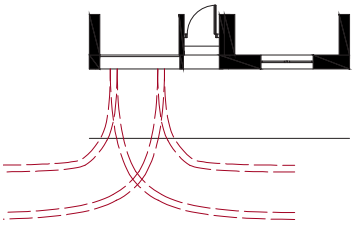


SITTING	LEANING	LOOKING	WALKING	INTERACTING	PLAYING
✘	✘		✘	✘	✘
waiting for someone protection from rain chatting	waiting for someone protection from rain chatting		entering exiting passing by	talking nodding arguing	

TYPOLOGICAL ANALYSIS
facade

Type 5 | Garage door

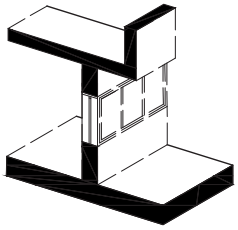


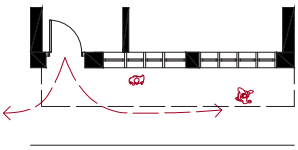


SITTING	LEANING	LOOKING	WALKING	INTERACTING	PLAYING
	✘ waiting for deliveries	✘ interior views		✘ arranging deliveries	

TYPOLOGICAL ANALYSIS
facade

Type 6 | Overhang

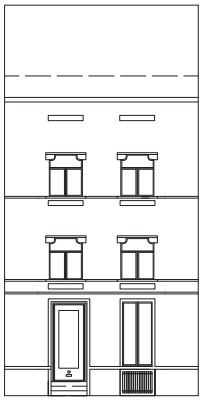


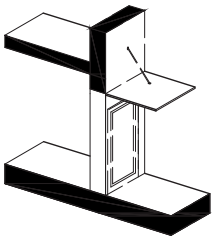


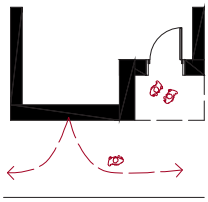
SITTING	LEANING	LOOKING	WALKING	INTERACTING	PLAYING
	✘ waiting for someone protection from rain chatting		✘ protection from rain	✘ protection from rain talking nodding arguing	

TYPOLOGICAL ANALYSIS
facade

Type 7 | Front door canopy



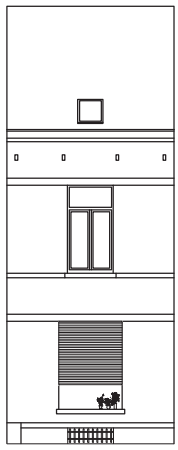


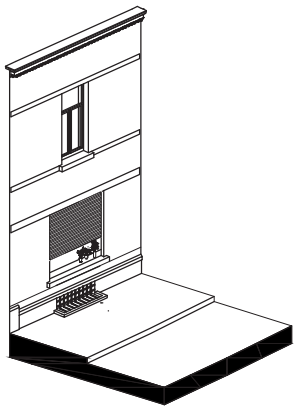


SITTING	LEANING	LOOKING	WALKING	INTERACTING	PLAYING
✘ waiting for someone protection from rain chatting	✘ waiting for someone protection from rain chatting			✘ protection from rain talking nodding arguing	

TYPOLOGICAL ANALYSIS
facade

Type 8 | Large ground floor window

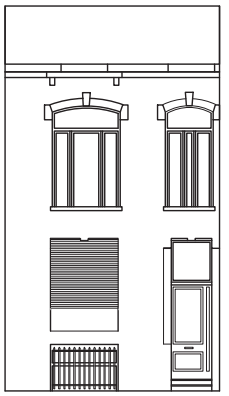


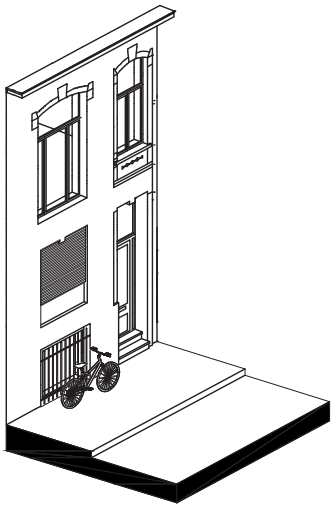


SITTING	LEANING	LOOKING	WALKING	INTERACTING	PLAYING
		✘ views to street connection to exterior		✘ talking to a known passerby	

TYPOLOGICAL ANALYSIS
facade

Type 9 | Railings

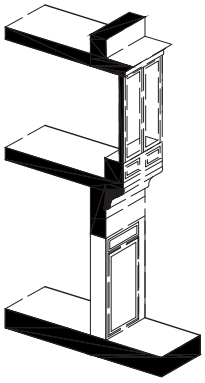


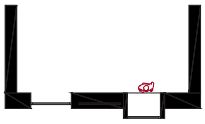


SITTING	LEANING	LOOKING	WALKING	INTERACTING	PLAYING
	✘ leaning/ securing objects i.e. bike	✘ activity discouranged by the railings			

TYPOLOGICAL ANALYSIS
facade

Type 10 | Bay window

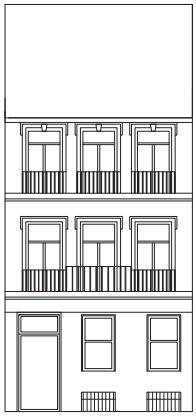


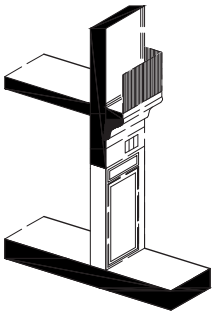


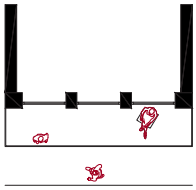
SITTING	LEANING	LOOKING	WALKING	INTERACTING	PLAYING
✘		✘ views to street connection to exterior		✘ talking to a known passerby	

TYPOLOGICAL ANALYSIS
facade

Type 11 | Balcony



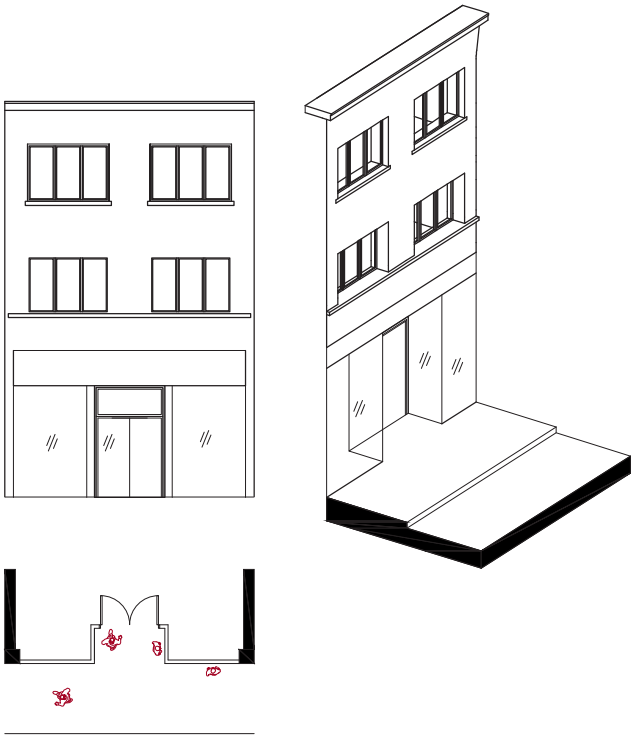




SITTING	LEANING	LOOKING	WALKING	INTERACTING	PLAYING
✘ views to street	✘ views to street	✘ views to street		✘ talking to a known passerby	

TYPOLOGICAL ANALYSIS
facade

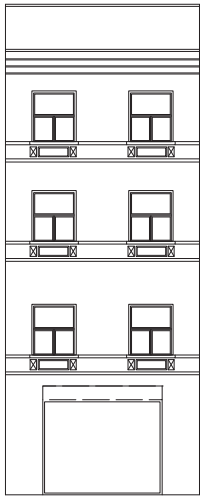
Type 12 | Vitrines with niche

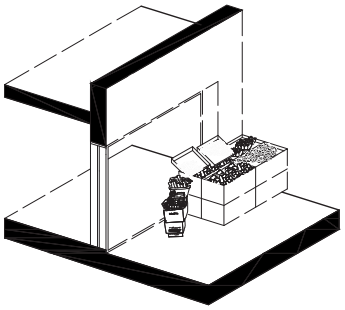


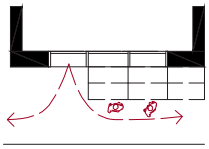
SITTING	LEANING	LOOKING	WALKING	INTERACTING	PLAYING
		✘ closer views of products	✘ walking by and looking	✘ discussing about products and prices	

TYPOLOGICAL ANALYSIS
pavement

Type 13 | Extension on pavement



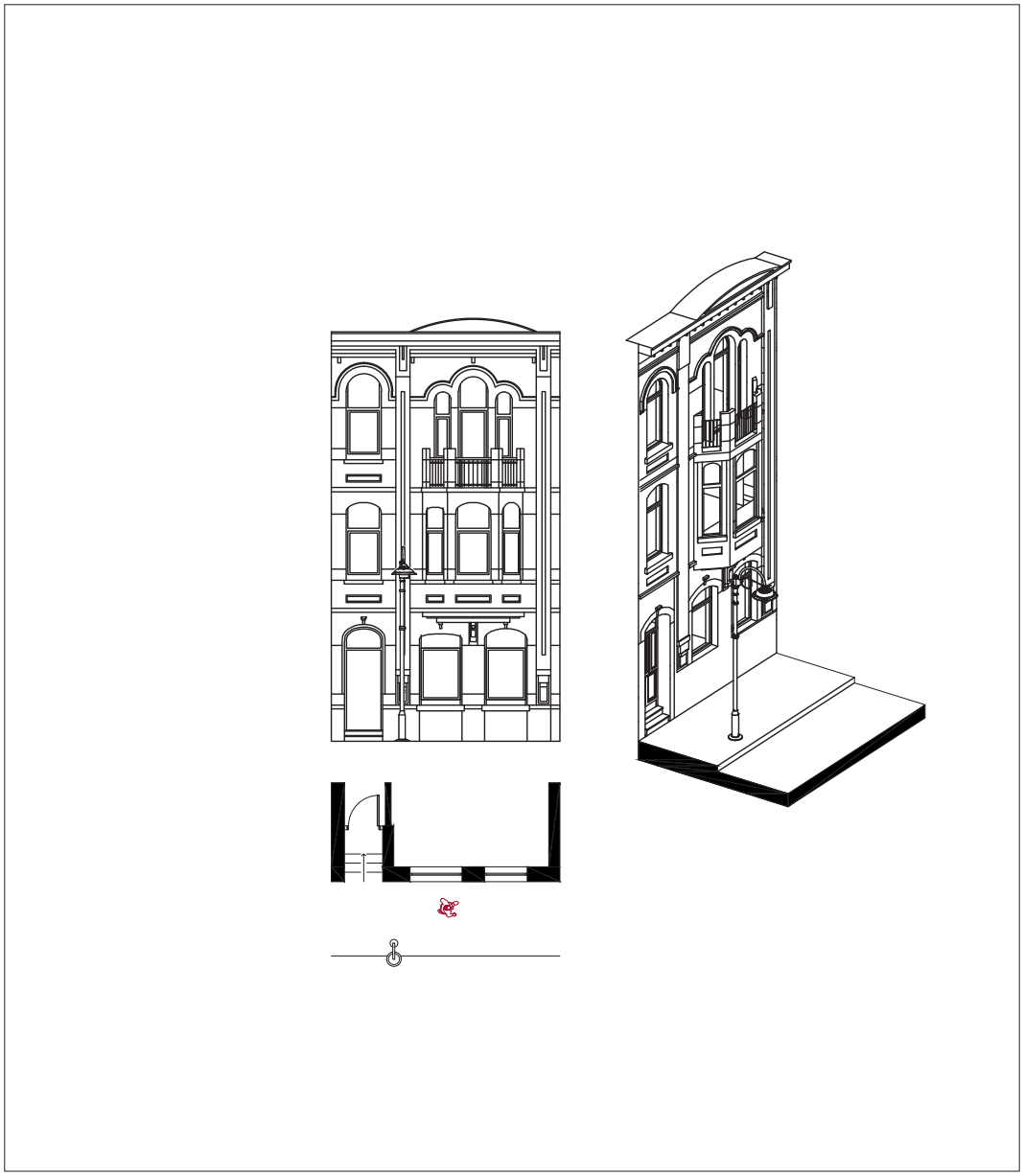




SITTING	LEANING	LOOKING	WALKING	INTERACTING	PLAYING
		✘ closer views of products	✘ walking by and looking	✘ discussing about products and prices	

TYPOLOGICAL ANALYSIS
pavement

Type 14 | Street lamp post

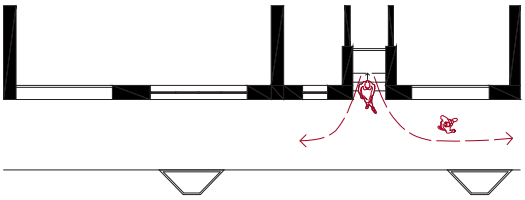


SITTING	LEANING	LOOKING	WALKING	INTERACTING	PLAYING
	✘ waiting for someone	✘ ensuring better views and safety at night			

TYPOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

pavement

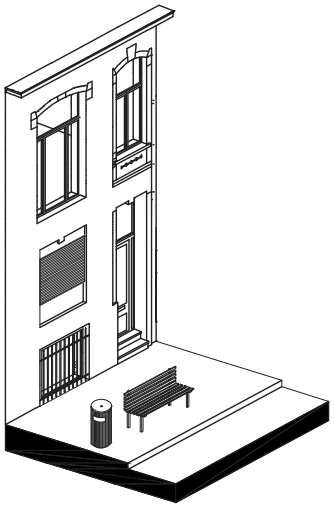
Type 15 | Trees

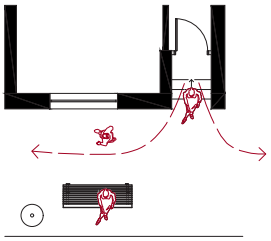


SITTING	LEANING	LOOKING	WALKING	INTERACTING	PLAYING
	✘ waiting for someone		✘ walking under the shade	✘ walking under the shade	

TYPOLOGICAL ANALYSIS
pavement

Type 16 | Bench
Type 17 | Rubbish bin

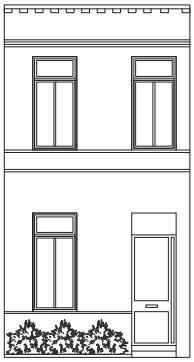


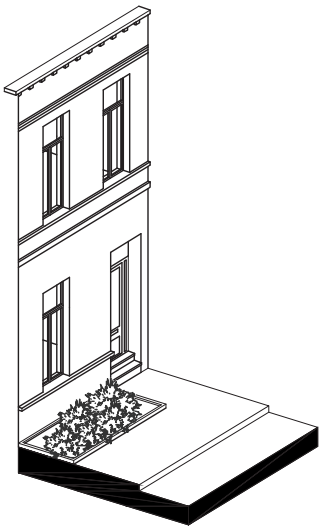


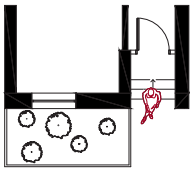
SITTING	LEANING	LOOKING	WALKING	INTERACTING	PLAYING
✘ alone or with friends	✘ waiting for someone			✘ socializing on bench	✘

TYPOLOGICAL ANALYSIS
pavement

Type 18 | Front yard



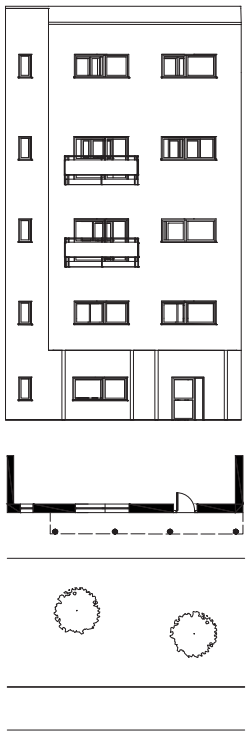


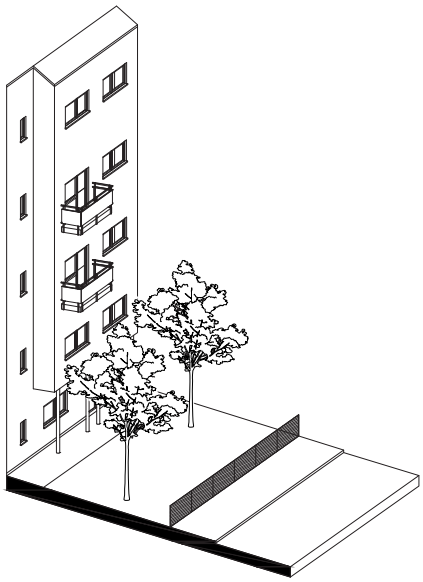


SITTING	LEANING	LOOKING	WALKING	INTERACTING	PLAYING
✘ waiting for someone		✘ pleasant view for passersby	✘ preventing pedestrians from walking close to the building		

TYPOLOGICAL ANALYSIS
pavement

Type 19 | Deep front yard





SITTING	LEANING	LOOKING	WALKING	INTERACTING	PLAYING
	✘ waiting for someone	✘ pleasant view for passersby	✘ preventing pedestrians from walking close to the building	✘ talking nodding arguing	✘

CASE STUDY

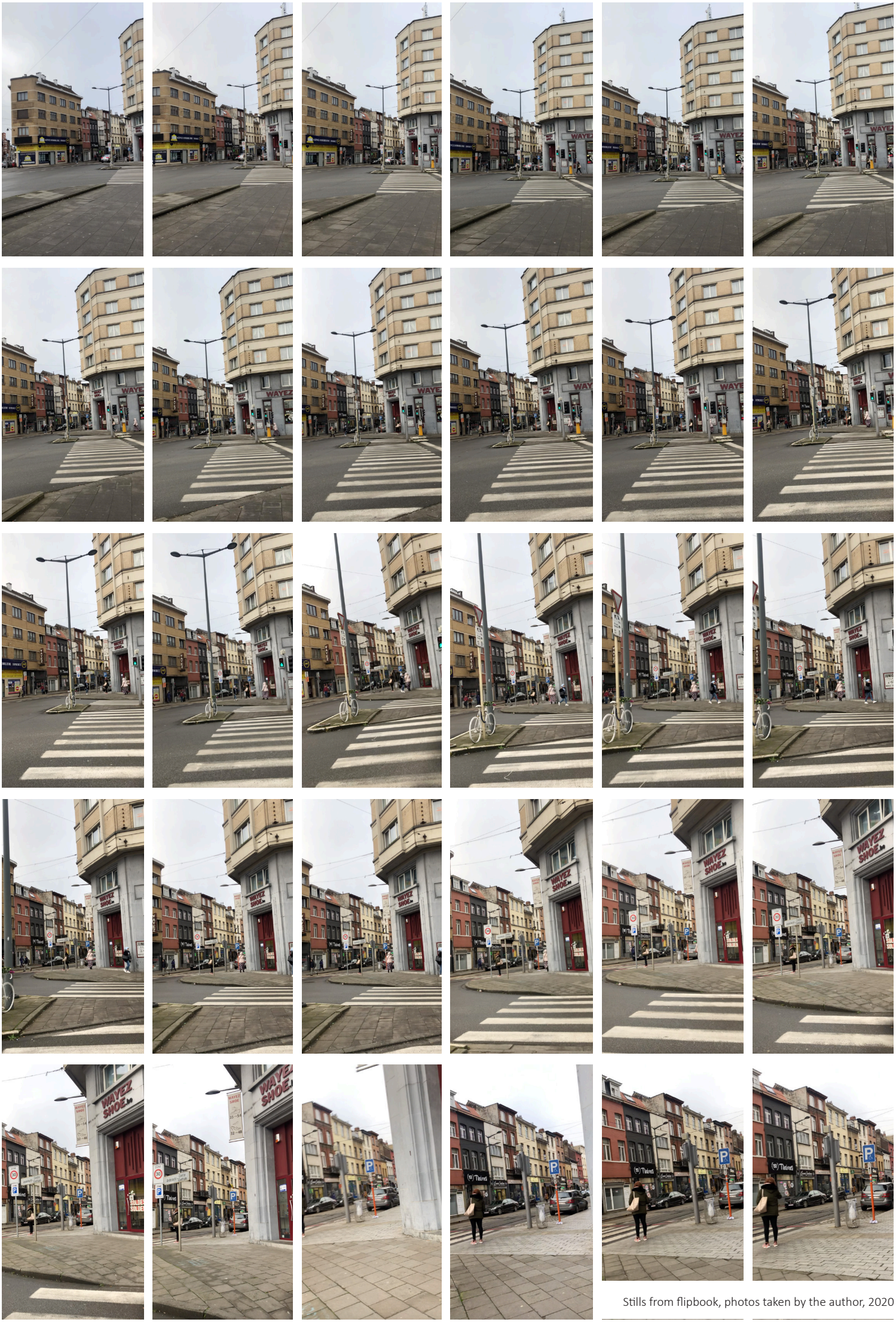
In order to understand the effect of several of these types in a continuous cityscape it becomes necessary to focus on a specific street as a case study. As expected, the variety of types identified within one street is not as wide as the categories distinguished in the previous stage of the research where the scale was the area of Anderlecht as a whole. This zoomed in approach can give us a glimpse on the real life on the edges of the street. The street chosen is rue Wayez, the most commercial street of Anderlecht, that managed to maintain this role even after the development of new shopping malls in the area. It is a multi-cultural and lively street that functions as a destination or passage point for shoppers and residents.

The materials for this stage of the research in the form of visual and written information was collected on site, on rue Wayez. The field work lasted for three days. Focus was placed on the type of commercial facades that are in some cases pushed inwards, inviting the pedestrians to look at the vitrines. Furthermore, the appropriation of the pavement was noticeable, where the display of products in front of shops expanded past the façade. The effect of these elements on the street life and the people passing by was documented through a series of photographs taken along both sides of the street, assembled together in a collection of two flipbooks that accompany this research book. Selected images from this collection, are analyzed in relation to the different objects that are visible on the pavement and the way they may function as boundaries obstructing the movement of pedestrians. The last part of the case study is comprised of two surveys, one of which is targeted towards the people passing by, while the other towards the shop owners. The results of these surveys, even though the samples were limited (15 surveys for pedestrians, 15 surveys for shop owners), they do give us an impression of the way a typical commercial street in the area of Anderlecht functions.

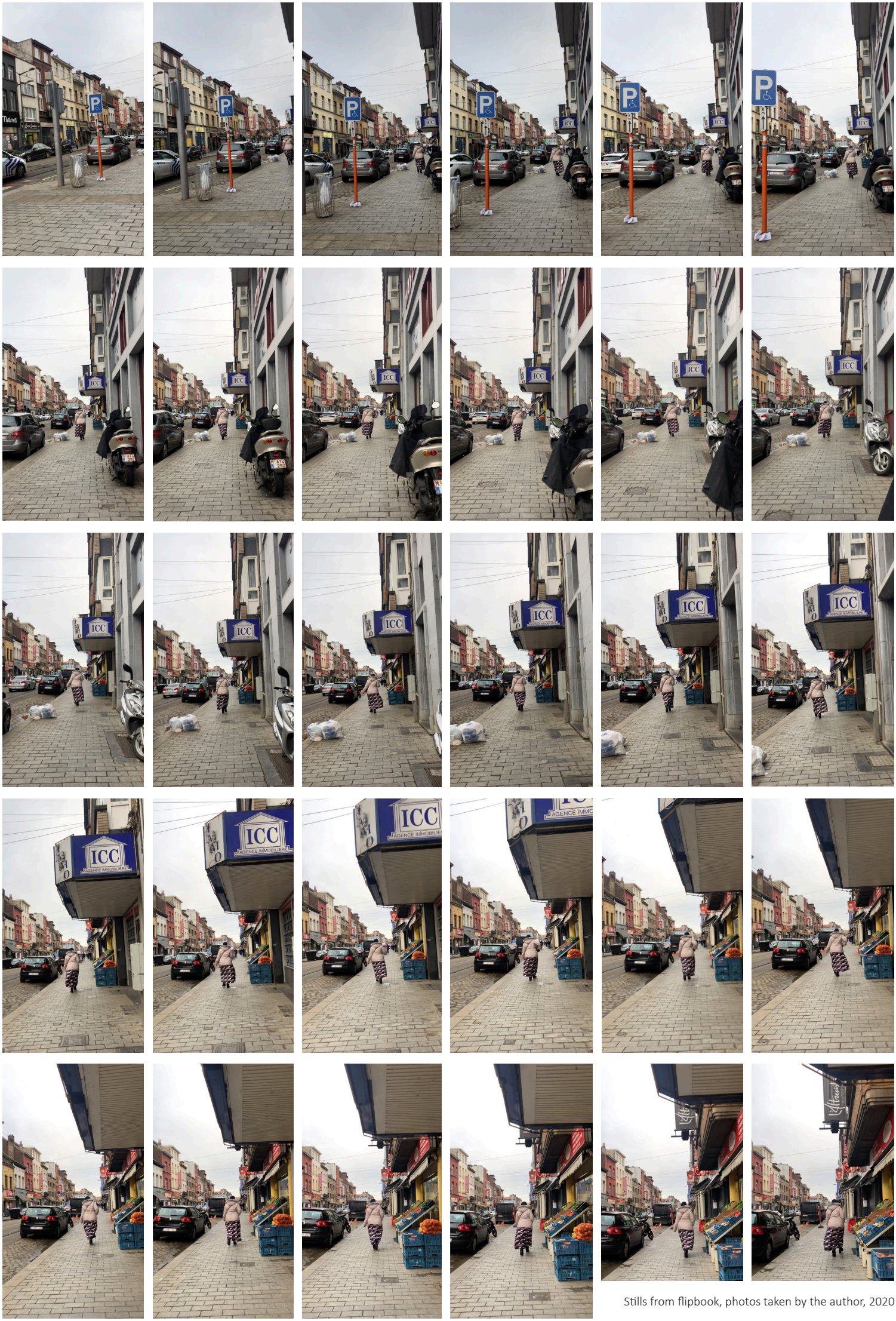
Difficulties encountered during the field work specifically in regards to the surveys included the language barrier, as the majority of people in the area do not speak English and I don't speak French. This problem was overcome by showing them a paper stating my intentions as a researcher and politely asking them to complete the survey that I had prepared in two languages, English and French, depending on their preference. The changes of the weather proved to be another challenge as when it started to rain the amount of people passing by was significantly reduced. Most of the people either entered shops or were standing under covered areas to protect themselves from the rain. Furthermore in some cases, my questions regarding the display of products on the pavement and their area of residence were received with suspicion, even though I informed them about the anonymity of the survey.

In order to document the continuity of the life along the street I used the medium of photography. I received negative and discouraging comments from pedestrians during this attempt and therefore I had to come up with an alternative medium that would not disrupt the natural flow of the life on the street. In the end I placed my phone at chest height, following Vivian Maiers technique, and documented with a series of videos everything I was coming across as a pedestrian myself on the street. From this video I later on extracted stills that I compiled into flipbooks.

WAYEZ
PIF
POINT
D'INFORMATION
JEUNESSE
ANDERLECHT



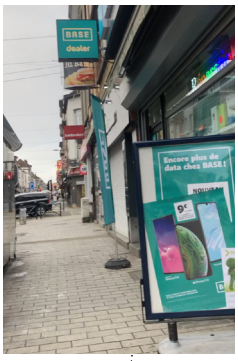
Stills from flipbook, photos taken by the author, 2020

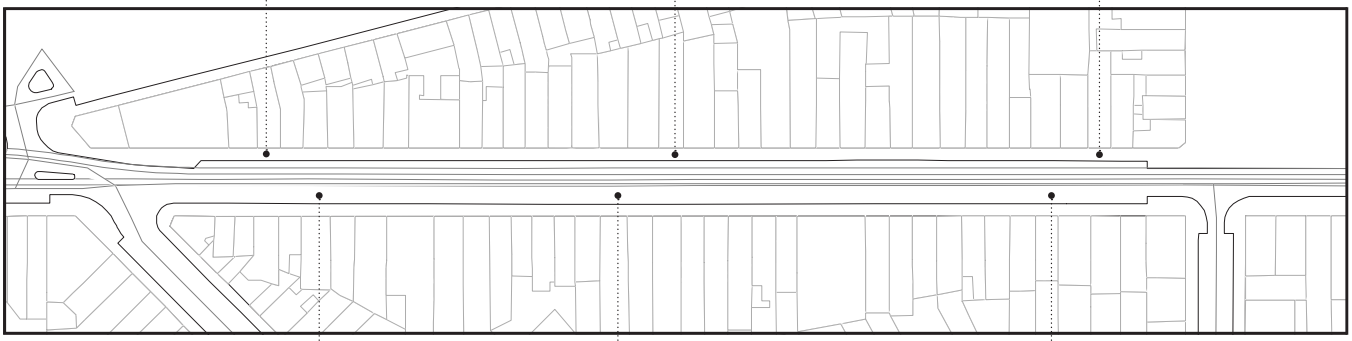


Stills from flipbook, photos taken by the author, 2020

RUE WAYEZ

pavement appropriation





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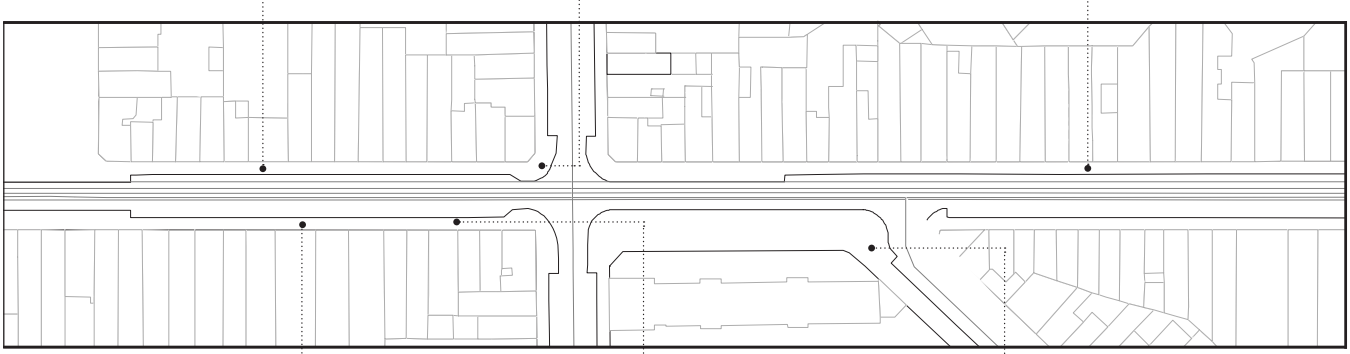

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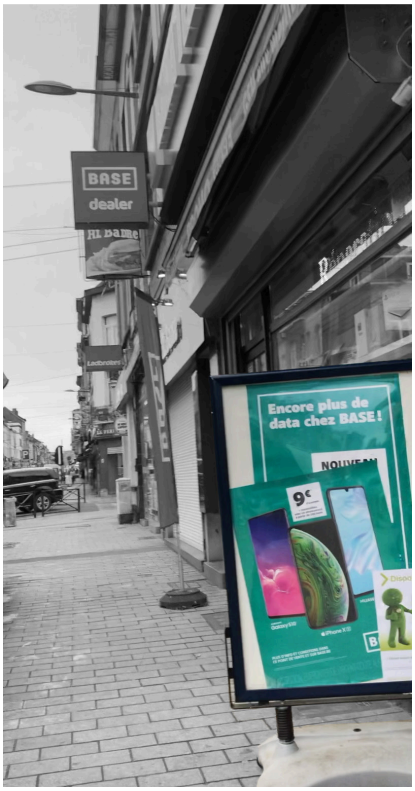
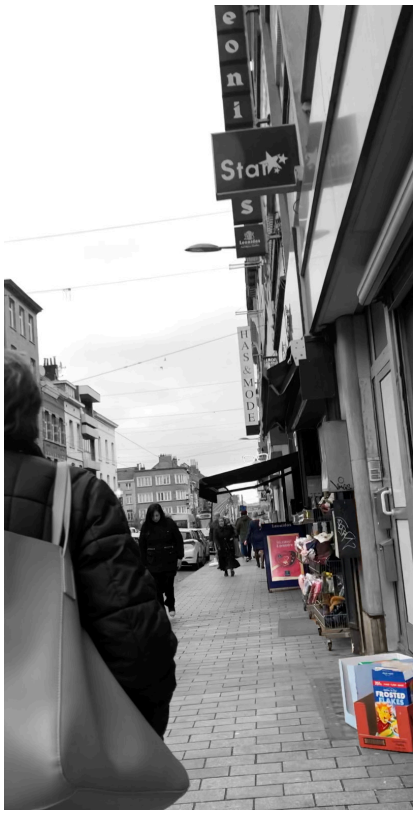
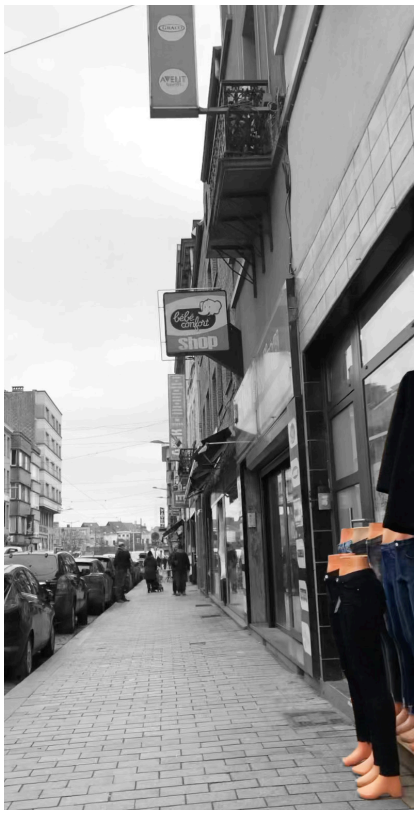
pavement appropriation



RUE WAYEZ

pavement appropriation





RUE WAYEZ

Survey for passersby

1. Do you identify yourself as: (circle)

Man Woman Other

2. What is your age? (circle)

15-25 45-55
25-35 55-65
35-45 >65

3. What ethnicity do you identify with? _____

4. Do you live in the area? (circle)

Yes No

5. If yes, how long have you lived in the area? _____years

6. How often do you visit this street? (circle)

Rarely Everyday Once a week Twice a week More than twice a week

7. How much time do you spend on this street? (circle)

Less than an hour 1 hour More than 1 hour More than 2 hours

8. How do you come to Rue Wayez? (circle)

On foot By car
By bike By tram
By bus

9. Do you recognize people on this street (shop owners or pedestrians)? (circle)

Yes, I recognize people but I don't know them
Yes, I recognize people and I know some of them
Yes, I recognize people and some are my friends
No, I don't recognize anyone on this street

10. What kind of activities do you usually engage with on this street? (circle)

Meet friends Pass through to go elsewhere
Shop Wait for the bus/tram

11. Do you come here to visit one shop or more? (circle)

One shop More than one shop

12. What kind of shops do you usually visit? (circle)

Supermarkets Boucherie
Boulangerie Clothing/Shoes

13. Do you make unplanned stops and look at the vitrines? (circle)

Always Sometimes Rarely Never

14. Do you end up buying products after those unplanned stops? (circle)

Always Sometimes Rarely Never

15. Do you usually pass through this street to go somewhere else? (circle) If yes, where? _____

Yes No

Thank you!

RUE WAYEZ

Survey for shop owners

1. Do you identify yourself as: (circle)

   Man Woman Other

2. What is your age? (circle)

   15-25 45-55
   25-35 55-65
   35-45 >65

3. What ethnicity do you identify with? _____

4. Do you live in the area? (circle)

   Yes No

5. If yes, how long have you lived in the area? _____years

6. How do you come to Rue Wayez?

   On foot
   By bike
   By bus
   By car
   By tram

7. How often do you get products delivered to your shop?

   Every day
   _____ times per week

8. How long can the trucks stop for outside your shop?

   10-15 minutes 20-30 minutes 1 hour More than 1 hour

9. Which is your busiest day of the week? _____

10. Are there any rules for putting products on the pavement?

    Yes No

11. If yes, how long are you allowed to display the products on the pavement?

    During working hours
    All day and night
    Weekends

12. Do the residents complain about the noise of this commercial street?

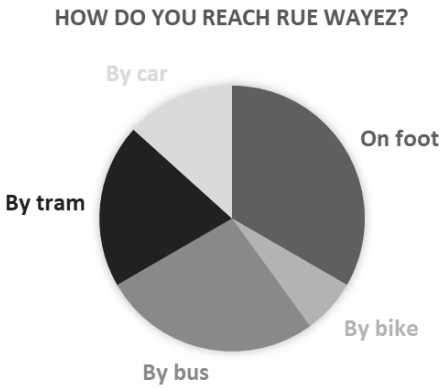
    Always Sometimes Rarely Never

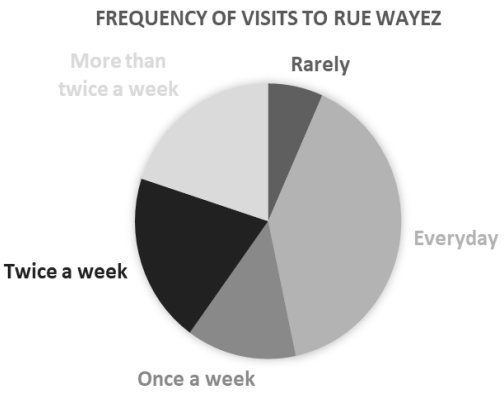
Thank you!

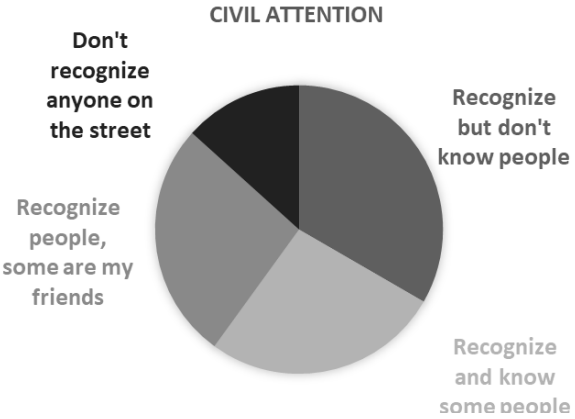
RUE WAYEZ

Survey for passersby

RESULTS





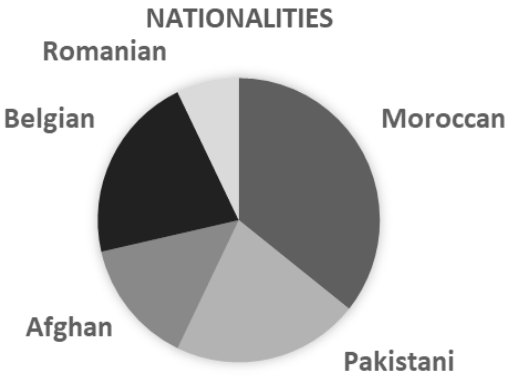


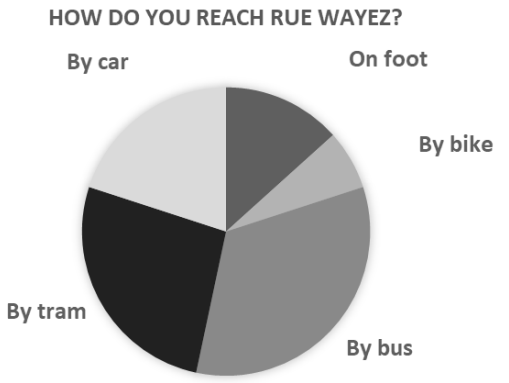
The majority of the pedestrians of rue Wayez who participated in the survey come from different countries. The most present nationality seems to be the Moroccan. Most people get there by bus or tram and usually tend to pass by almost everyday for different activities such as shopping, meeting friends, waiting for the bus or tram. It functions as a destination but also as a passage, that people use to get to other destinations. People who also live close to the street claim to not only recognize people but also to have developed friendships over time with workers or just frequent visitors of the street. Conversely, the people from live further away might recognize faces but not know other people while less frequent passersby don't recognize faces at all. Many participants responded positively to buying products even without intending to shop while passing by the vitrines. The commercial character of the street and spatial arrangement of the facades bringing the products closer to the pedestrians is considered as a possible reason why. Lastly the variety of shops within this one street satisfies the more that merely one need of the visitors and is thus considered a popular destination point within the city.

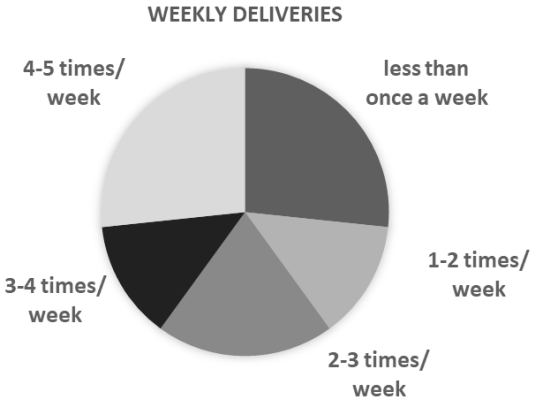
RUE WAYEZ

Survey for shop owners

RESULTS







The multiculturality of the street becomes evident from the various countries of origin of the shop owners. The majority of the shop owners who participated in the survey live in the area of Anderlecht and they commute to rue Wayez with busses or with the tram. The frequency of the deliveries to the shop usually depends on the type of shop. Supermarkets, butcher's, grocery and fish shops receive deliveries almost daily while others such as clothing shops even once a month. The amount of time that trucks are allowed to stop outside of the shop is around 15 to 20 minutes, but no more than that. Display of products on the pavement is relatively limited due to laws enforced by the municipality, however if done, products and shelves or crates containing the products have to be carried into the shop after working hours. Sometimes during busy delivery times they receive complaints from the residents of the upper floors.

FROM RESEARCH TO DESIGN

Understanding the variety of the types of connection between the pubic exterior and private interior spaces in the area of Anderlecht and at the same time the type of activities such spaces might evoke will be crucial for the development of my building design. The building will include living and working programs, potentially combined with several commercial units. The variety of activities that will be included requires entrances and thus transitions of different natures. Testing the extent to which the public and private realms might penetrate each other and taking under consideration the consequences of each case will be key. Furthermore, the spatial arrangement of the transition from semi-private to the private spaces of the building will also be worked on according to two main parameters. The first is the positive interaction between the users of the different programs while the second is the balance between their boundary in terms of privacy, including visual, sensory and olfactory contact.

...TO BE CONTINUED