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The influence of the built environment's sensory characteristics on pedestrians' walking experience: a multi-sensory study in Béjaïa (Algeria), with exploratory insights from Groningen (The Netherlands)

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Abstract:

This presentation examines how the sensory characteristics of the built urban environment influence pedestrians' perceptions and walking experience in the city, based on the case study of Béjaïa (Algeria). It is structured around three complementary studies focusing on: (1) the effects of microclimatic conditions on thermal perception and walking comfort, (2) the influence of the urban soundscape on perceived comfort, sense of safety, and walking pleasantness, and (3) the effects of street-level visual characteristics (visualscape) on visual walkability (VWP). Each study relates objective indicators to in situ perception data collected during walking routes conducted within contrasting urban fabrics (the historic medina and the lower city). Overall, the findings aim to provide evidence-based decision-support elements to improve walkability and guide the regeneration of public spaces in comparable Mediterranean contexts.
A complementary exploratory analysis in Groningen (The Netherlands) provides preliminary comparative insights, mainly for the visualscape/VWP component, and is framed within the perspective of a broader multi-country study aimed at distinguishing robust factors from those whose influence is context-dependent across different urban settings.

Keywords: built environment; pedestrian perception; walking experience; microclimate; urban soundscape; visualscape

Short Biography:

Yacine Mansouri is a PhD researcher in architecture and urban planning at the University of Liège. He is a member of the Sustainable Building Design Lab (SBD) and affiliated with the Urban and Environmental Engineering (UEE) research unit within the Faculty of Applied Sciences. He is also a member of the international ANWAC network, affiliated with the WALK21 international organization.

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