

Maritimity and habitability of large Mediterranean coastal cities

Maritimité et habitabilité des grandes villes littorales méditerranéennes



*Séminaire inaugural MaritiMedSeaties / MaritiMedSeaties Opening seminar
Marseille - Station marine d'Endoume - 19 mai 2025 / 19 May 2025*

Maritimity - Maritimité

Origin and proposals for testing the concept

Origine et proposition de mise à l'épreuve du concept



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***Maritimity*, a neologism that is not recognised in everyday language...**

- No entry in french language dictionnaires
- No entry in english language dictionnaires

... barely recognised in academic language

No entry in dictionnaires of geography

Though one entry in the online french glossary in geography of the *Ecole normale supérieure*

<https://geoconfluences.ens-lyon.fr/glossaire/maritimite>

... but a concept that does exist !



A concept developed in French in the 1990s

*Interdisciplinary conference in human and social sciences in **november 1991** (Paris)*

Maritimity at the end of the century, what meaning?
La maritimité en cette fin de siècle, quelle signification ?

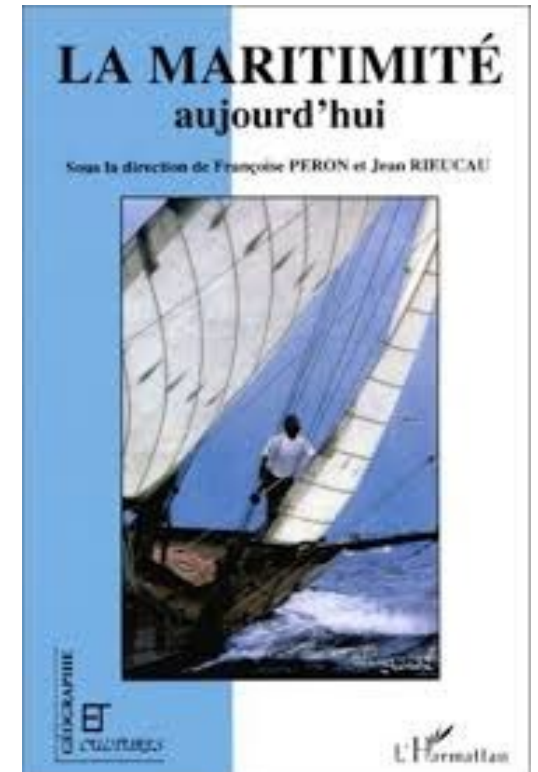


An academic initiative by Françoise Péron (Univ. of Brest) and Jean Rieucan (Univ. of Montpellier) grounded on the observation that the **links between humans and the sea were changing**

- traditional maritime activities in crisis
- new practices and strong attachment to the marine in populations who do not work in connexion with the sea nor live by the sea

An interest in **maritime identity** by researchers in Geography, History, Anthropology, and Law

A book in 1996



A concept to describe the maritime character of a population

= The ways a society makes the sea its own



6 sections
24 papers

The meaning of the sea *Le sens de la mer*

How does the maritime imprint the land, in space and time?
Comment le maritime s'inscrit à terre, dans l'espace et dans le temps ?

Maritimity and insularity *Maritimité et insularité*

The complex relationship between islands and the sea
Les rapports complexes de l'île et de la mer

Maritimity and legal framework *Maritimité et cadre juridique*

Reconsidering land-sea interface regulations
Reconsidérer la réglementation du contact terre-mer

Urban maritimity *La maritimité urbaine*

The will to change images
La reconversion souhaitée des images

Tropical and far eastern maritimity *Les maritimités tropicales et extrême-orientales*

Conflicts and changes in representations and uses
Conflits et mutations des représentations et des usages

Tourism and maritimity *Tourisme et maritimité*

Upgrading the coastline
La revalorisation du littoral

A concept to describe the maritime character of a place

The set of **relationships that bind human societies to the sea**, which contribute to the making of specific landscapes, representations and cultures (Péron and Rieucau 1996).



Applying to populations living by the sea, the concept **also applies to the region/place where they live**. By extension, it **characterises a place**.



Curiously, the chapter on *Urban maritimity* in Péron & Rieucau (1996) focuses mainly on **images issues**...



*Civilian submarine SAGA in Marseille
Reformed and open to visitors on
request*

- Military ports: university and sea for a new image
- Coastal towns rebuilt after war-related destruction in search of a positive image
- The future of Marseille's *maritimity*
- Bordeaux in search of a new *maritimity*
- Reclaiming/renewing urban ports: the case of Baltimore

A rather long period without any publications using the concept

Nothing published before 2010. After: studies mainly in French

Archeology

- EN** Tuddenham 2010. **Maritime Cultural Landscapes, Maritimity and Quasi Objects**, *Journal of Maritime Archeology*
Paysages culturels maritimes, maritimité et quasi-objets. DOI: 10.1007/s11457-010-9055-0

Cultural geography

Dantas, 2011. **La maritimité chez les indiens du Brésil**, *Géographie et cultures*
Indians maritimity in the ancient Brazil. DOI: 10.4000/gc.633

Dantas, 2014. **La maritimité sous les Tropiques : les contributions d'une étude réalisée à Fortaleza (Ceará)**, *Confins*
Maritimity in the tropics: contributions from a study carried out in Fortaleza (Ceará). DOI: 10.4000/norois.10683

- EN** Dantas, 2016. **Coastal Geography in Northeast Brazil: Analyzing Maritimity in the Tropics**. Springer,
Springer Briefs in Latin American Studies

Anthropology

Levain & Laval, 2018. **Jusqu'où va la mer ? Une exploration des marges de l'anthropologie maritime**, *Revue d'ethnoécologie*
How far does the sea go? Exploring the margins of maritime anthropology. DOI:10.4000/ethnoecologie.3449

A recent revival, but mainly by French academics

History

EN

Barron, 2021. **Revealing maritimity in 19th century France. Representations, heritage and history**, *Artefact*
Dévoiler la maritimité dans la France du XIXe siècle : représentations, patrimoine et histoire. DOI: 10.4000/artefact.10175

Geography

Camus-Le Pape et al., 2021. Les classes de mer finistériennes à l'épreuve de leur diffusion spatiale. L'ancrage territorial d'un modèle éducatif militant, *Noroi*, DOI: 10.4000/noroi.10753
Finisterian sea classes and their spatial diffusion. The challenges of an educational model rooted in local activism

Archeology

Laubé, 2021. Maritimité et paysage culturel maritime : les apports du modèle « Any-artefact », *Artefact*
Maritimity and the maritime cultural landscape. Contribution of the "Anyartefact" model. DOI: 10.4000/artefact.10228

Geography

Gontier et al., 2021. Les fêtes maritimes en Bretagne : quand le territoire rencontre le patrimoine, une approche sociogéographique, *Noroi*. DOI: 10.4000/noroi.10683
Maritime festivals in Brittany: when the territory meets heritage, a socio-geographic approach

Geography

Foulquier et al., 2023. La maritimisation des Petites Antilles, entre mondialisation et maritimité « ordinaire », *Etudes caribéennes*. DOI: 10.4000/etudescaribeennes.27513
Maritimization in The Lesser Antilles: Between Global and Local Stakes

Geography

EN

Robert, 2024. **What can sea-related associations reveal about a coastal region's maritimity? A case study in southern France**, *Maritime studies*. DOI: 10.1007/s40152-023-00346-w
Que peuvent révéler les associations liées à la mer sur la maritimité d'une région côtière ? Une étude de cas dans le sud de la France

A recent questioning on the local maritime identity in PACA region

**Call for studies by the Region in
2020**

“A look at regional maritime identities”
(*Regards sur les identités maritimes
régionales*)



**Multidisciplinary symposium
in 2021**



Book in 2024

Bouffier S., Robert S. (dir), 2024.
Maritimité(s) en région Provence-
Alpes-Côte d'Azur, PUP, 242 p.

<https://presses-universitaires.univ-amu.fr/fr/actualites/maritimites-provence-cote-dazur>



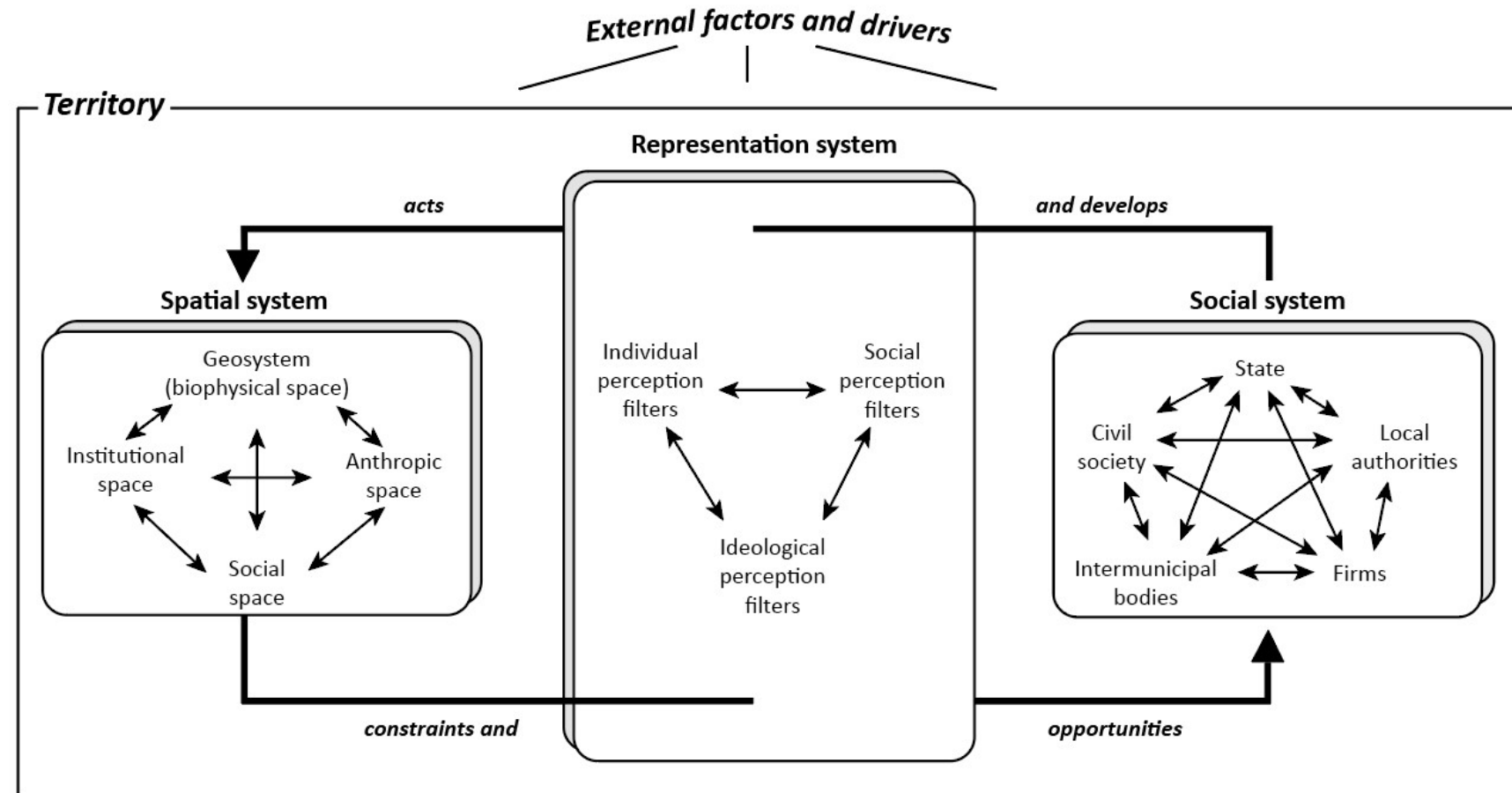
MaritiMedSeaties: exploring the relationship between maritimity and habitability in large coastal cities

What is the maritimity of a city ? How does it contribute to its habitability ?

Proposal : what is the maritimity of its territory ?

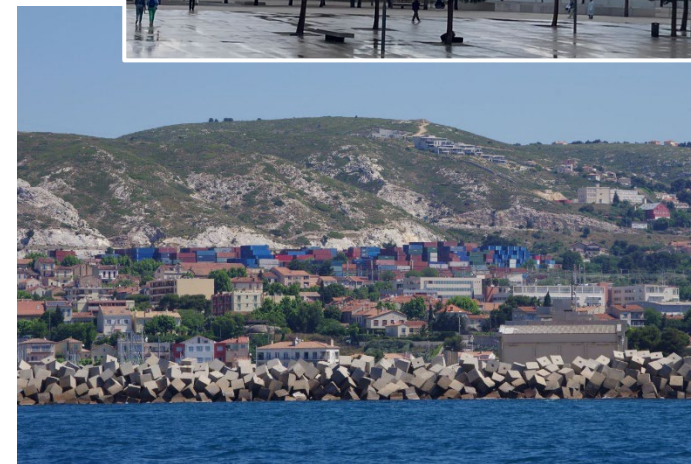
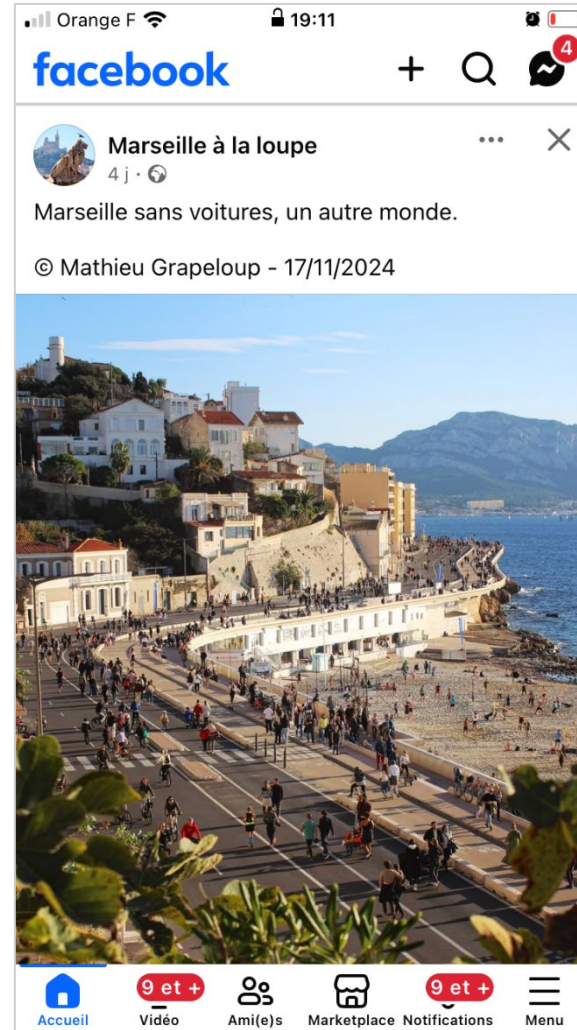
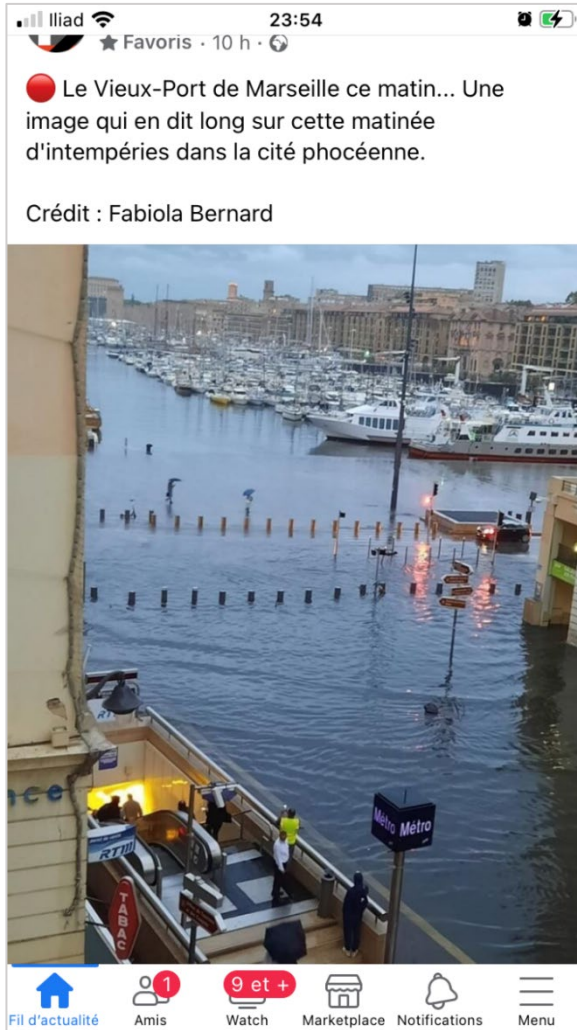
- Appropriated and administered portion of land, with geographical, biophysical, legal, social, cultural and symbolic characteristics (Brunet, 1993 ; Le Berre, 1995; Moine, 2006).
- System of interactions between a human community and the geographical area in which it lives.

Adapted from (Moine, 2006)



MaritiMedSeaties: addressing various social and ecological issues

Coastal risks, access to the shore, pollution, development, cultural identity ...



A few more images



Activities and uses on the coast, Plage du Cavaou in Fos-sur-Mer (2017)



A UNESCO delegation visiting Marseille bay in the perspective of a World Heritage inscription (2023)



Pointe-Rouge Yachting harbour, Marseille (2023)



Disused metallurgical plant, Marseille (2023)



Marseille commercial harbor, southern pass (2023)



Marseille commercial harbor, containers terminal (2023)



Neighbourhood demonstration to regain access to the coastline, Marseille (2019)



References

- Bouffier S., Robert S. (dir.), 2024. Maritimité(s) en région Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, Presses universitaires de Provence, L'atelier méditerranéen, 242 p.
- Moine A., 2007. Le territoire comme un système complexe : un concept opératoire pour l'aménagement et la géographie, *L'Espace géographique*, (35) 2, 115-132. <https://doi.org/10.3917/eg.352.0115>
- Péron F. , Rieucan J. (dir.), 1996. La maritimité aujourd'hui, L'Harmattan, 336 p.
- Robert, 2024. What can sea-related associations reveal about a coastal region's maritimty? A case study in southern France. *Maritime studies*. 23, 4. [10.1007/s40152-023-00346-w](https://doi.org/10.1007/s40152-023-00346-w)

Thanks for your attention

Street art, in a disused factory nearby the port,
Madrague de la Ville, Marseille (2016)

