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Car free urban districts – Interactions between measures, implementation and experience

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Abstract
Cities and car traffic does not always fit well together. Apart from the well-known environmental problems associated with traffic congestion (e.g. air pollution and noise, climate change and global warming), there are also negative local effects in the form of increased risk of traffic accidents, abuse of key resources (energy and time), gender issues in terms of accessibility, security and power over public space and mobility patterns, financial losses and lost space due to increasing car traffic and the need for available parking spaces (e.g. Sheller & Urry, 2000; Berger et al., 2014; Halling et al., 2016). These problems can significantly reduce the cities' attractiveness for residents and temporary visitors. Furthermore, an increase in car traffic has proved to be negative for place related functions such as meeting places, or just places to visit or stay at, and for public health because of the reduced opportunities to perform physical and social activities such as walking and cycling (Lee, & Buncher, 2008). In order to effectively manage the present traffic overload, public administrations and transport authorities must have a comprehensive understanding of the local context, including the mobility needs of travelers and residents. One of the starting points for this three-year research project on planning and implementation of car-free districts has been to perform an interdisciplinary literature review, in which literature that triangulates car-free urban planning measures, concrete neighborhood interventions and quality of life parameters is scrutinized. The intention has been to find out the state of art regarding the interaction between measures, actual implementation and users' experience of car free districts. The results so far suggests that there is a lack of research addressing the interaction of the three variables, suggesting the need for more empirical studies that accounts for all

these different levels of environmental interactions from macro to micro (i.e. policy to final users of place).

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