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"Winning back the attractiveness of historical city centers by giving back its public spaces to the pedestrian"

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Abstract

The attractiveness of many historical city centers has been endangered, if not destroyed, by an overwhelming car traffic.

The demand for easy car accessibility has neglected the fact that, once arrived in the centre, all visitors have to walk.

The multitude of functions, typical for European city centers, requires a good "inner accessibility".

Furthermore, shopping in the city centre increasingly has got the character of a recreational activity, an expression of a post-modern lifestyle.

This can work only if an interesting townscape (typical for historical city centers) can be perceived while walking in a good environment, that means, in undisturbed and well designed public open spaces.

In several German cities this has been achieved by the development - step by step within several decades - of large pedestrian precincts, comprehending street-networks of 6-10 km total length.

Munich is the most well known example, others are Bonn, Freiburg Nuremberg and Regensburg - and several more.

Walking under this condition became a pleasurable activity in itself, and city centers defended themselves against suburban shopping centers.

The success of this strategy is proved by the fact that meanwhile most new shopping centers are realized within or immediately adjacent to the historical city centre.

A good walking environment creates economical strength!

City centers with a poor environment, in contrast, often suffer from degradation and look very outdated.

Biography

Rolf Monheim, Professor, Section for Applied Urban Geography, Department of Geosciences, University of Bayreuth.

Prof. Dr. Rolf Monheim is considered the Germany's foremost expert on the design and management of pedestrian and traffic reduced city centers.

Professor Monheim's book *Fussgänger Bereiche* (Pedestrian Zones) is the first comprehensive study of the development of German pedestrian zones and widely considered a classic.

In the last 30 years, the author has specialized in town, transportation and retail planning especially for city centers. His research consists mainly in surveys among city-centre-visitors (place of residence, mode of transport, activities, and perceptions) and retailers and in the analysis of pedestrian traffic. His main planning issues are pedestrianisation, traffic calming, mobility, green modes, retail and recreation, city management.

Membership:

ADFC (Allgemeiner Deutscher Fahrradclub)

DVAG (Deutscher Verband für Angewandte Geographie)

DVWG (Deutsche Verkehrswissenschaftliche Gesellschaft)

SRL (Vereinigung für Stadt-, Regional- und Landesplanung)

VCD (Verkehrsclub Deutschland)

VEP-Netzwerk (Verkehrsentwicklungsplaner/innen-Netzwerk)

VGDH (Verband der Geographen an Deutschen Hochschulen)