

Flaniermeile Friedrichstraße

From a car-oriented street to a pedestrian zone

Social Aspects of infrastructure development

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Summary

The Friedrichstraße, located in the central district of Berlin Mitte, spans a length of 3.3km. Renowned as a bustling boulevard housing a variety of shops, hotels, and restaurants, it holds significance in Berlin due to its proximity to prominent landmarks such as the Brandenburger Gate and Checkpoint Charlie. Notably, the Friedrichstraße has been severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in numerous closures, particularly due to its reliance on tourism given its geographical location.

In response to these challenges, the City of Berlin decided to close a 500m stretch of the Friedrichstraße to vehicular traffic and designate it for pedestrian use. This initiative, named Flaniermeile (translated: street to stroll), underwent a traffic trial from August to November 2020 to assess the impact of the traffic changes. However, the project faced substantial criticism during the trial period, primarily due to the prohibition of car usage. Following a positive evaluation by the Berlin Senate, the 500m section officially became the Flaniermeile in January 2023.

Despite the project's positive evaluation, it continues to face resistance from commercial entities and political figures. Consequently, the research question "How has public participation occurred in the case of the Flaniermeile in Friedrichstraße, Berlin?" is proposed. To address this research question, a mixed-method approach has been employed. Quantitative surveys, analyzed using SPSS, were conducted to gain a comprehensive understanding of the local community's perceptions and the project's effects. Additionally, three in-depth interviews were conducted to gather insights from various perspectives, including an on-site economic entity, a resident, and a representative from the responsible senate department.

It can be concluded that the traffic trial and the project itself were implemented during the challenging times of the COVID-19 pandemic and the energy crisis, which initially contributed to frustrations among the public. Notably, the traffic trial lacked public participation due to its primary focus on public information dissemination. Moving forward, evaluating the planned public participation process after the implementation of the redesign becomes crucial, as this aspect remains a current limitation. Furthermore, conducting statistical analyses to capture the overall perception of local residents following the street's reconstruction would provide valuable insights.

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1. Background

The population is growing and urbanisation is an ongoing process that leads to clustered urban areas. Urbanisation has various advantages in terms of a high density of population and infrastructure and large-scale economies (European Commission, 2020). Related to the megatrends are their challenges, for example, housing, inequalities and social segregation, mobility and environmental degradation (European Commission, 2020). Inequalities and social segregation occur through unequal distributions of social groups based on various factors in urban space (European Commission, 2019). Mobility and Provision services put high pressure on urban spaces regarding congestion, air pollution and car ownership. The aforementioned challenges are impacted by climate change. Social inequalities will increase due to the risk of water scarcity, pollution and limited access to energy. Slowing down climate change has become a significant challenge in the 21st century.

Contemporary society is undergoing various transitions, one of which is the transition pertaining to mobility. Mobility and service provision in urban areas are expected to undergo significant changes in the future due to technological innovation and behaviour changes (European Commission, 2020). Streets designed for slow modes can help overcome different urban problems such as space, health issues and air pollution. Overall, slow-mode areas can be important in addressing space issues and climate change in urban areas by reducing carbon emissions, freeing up space, reducing traffic congestion and promoting sustainable urban design (Menzina & Google, 2021).

The importance of stakeholder engagement in infrastructure projects is due to its ability to foster trust, manage expectations, and address the concerns of all parties involved. Given the substantial effects of infrastructure projects on the community and the environment, engaging stakeholders throughout the project lifecycle is important. Nevertheless, stakeholder engagement should include not only government officials, furthermore businesses, NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations) and local residents or individuals who may be affected by or interested in the project. The engagement between different stakeholders can occur through surveys, hearings, meetings or consultation proceedings (Shift, 2013). Effective stakeholder engagement requires identifying and understanding the needs, interests, and concerns of each stakeholder group and developing appropriate strategies to engage with them, in order to mitigate the negative social impacts of projects (Wouters, 2022). The Flaniermeile project, translated as the "street to stroll," primary objectives encompass mitigating the detrimental effects of climate change and improving the visual allure of local neighbourhoods. This paper specifically centres on the Friedrichstraße, which is part of the Flaniermeile project. The project endeavours to accomplish its goals through the implementation of strategies targeting carbon emission reduction and the enhancement of Friedrichstraße's aesthetic appeal.

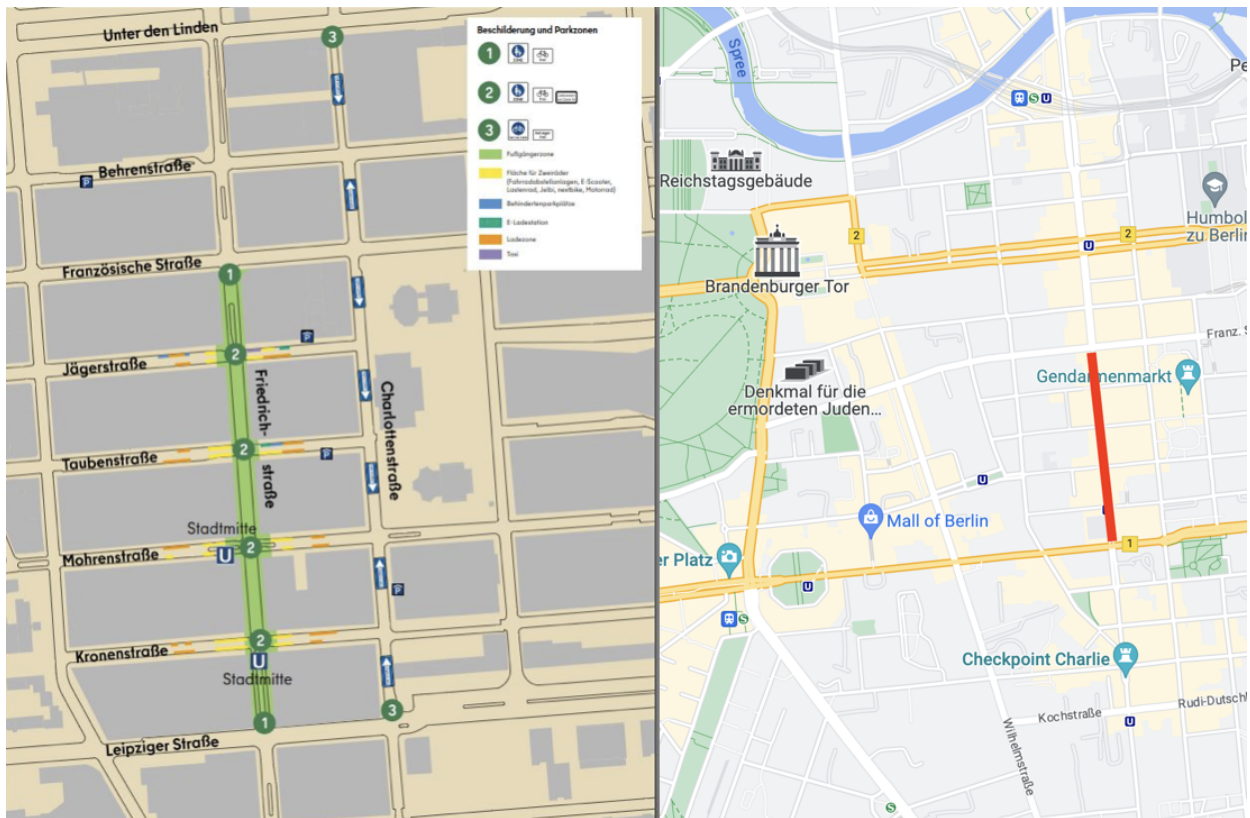


Figure 1 (left): layout of the Flaniermeile, Friedrichstraße (SenUmvk, 2022), Figure 2 (right): Location of the Project (Google Maps, 2023)

The map presented above (Figure 1) illustrates the layout of the Flaniermeile project. The green colour indicates the designated pedestrian area spanning a distance of 500 meters. Intersections marked as numbers 1 and 2 indicate points where cyclists can traverse the Flaniermeile. Additional features such as yellow, orange, blue, and violet colours represent bike storage facilities, e-charging stations, loading zones, and taxi pick-up points respectively. Adjacent to the project area, Charlottenstraße is a one-way street designated as a bike street while remaining accessible to residents' cars. It should be noted that the inclusion of Charlottenstraße as a bike street is unrelated to the project itself, as it forms part of Berlin's broader bike infrastructure network. Figure 2 provides a contextual representation of the project site within the broader neighbourhood of Mitte, located in Berlin.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Green Infrastructure

The challenges of expanding traditional infrastructure systems in urban areas have led to a significant reduction in urban ecological adaptability, flexibility and sustainability, thereby contributing to the current threat of climate change (Filho et. al, 2021). Urban green spaces, including parks and gardens, can serve as effective tools for protecting biodiversity and mitigating climate change (World Green Infrastructure Network, 2021). These spaces have the potential to cool cities, reduce the risk of flooding, and improve the health and well-being of urban residents (European Commission, 2019). In addition to the exclusion of cars from the Friedrichstraße, significant road improvements are planned, including the incorporation of trees, small gardens, and flowers. These green elements contribute to the enhancement of the urban environment by improving air quality, reducing the urban heat island effect and providing aesthetic and psychological benefits to city residents and visitors (Filho et. al, 2021)

2.2 Placemaking

Placemaking is a multifaceted concept and pragmatic approach that aims to improve the quality of life in neighbourhoods, cities or regions by encouraging a collaborative and participatory process of reimagining and transforming public spaces (Project for Public Spaces, 2007). Its fundamental objective is to strengthen the connection between individuals and the places they share, thereby maximizing the value that these spaces offer to the community. The Project for Public Spaces (2007) explains that placemaking goes beyond promoting better urban design and embraces a more comprehensive perspective that emphasizes creative patterns of use and considers the physical, cultural and social characteristics that define a place and support its ongoing evolution. As such, placemaking is an essential tool for shaping public spaces that are not only aesthetically appealing but also functionally and socially meaningful to the people who use them.

Considering the project Flaniermeile in Berlin the concept of placemaking would emphasise the participatory process and community-based participation resulting in quality spaces (Project for Public Spaces, 2007).

2.3 Public Participation

The ladder of citizen participation, developed by Sherry Arnstein in 1969, provides a framework for understanding different levels of citizen participation in decision-making processes. This ladder includes eight rungs, with the lowest levels representing tokenism and manipulation and the highest levels representing citizen control and empowerment (Arnstein, 1969). Similar to Arnstein the IAP2 (International Association for Public Participation, 2023) main objective is to endorse the implementation of public participation practices that incorporate the public in decision-making procedures (Rowe & Frewer 2000). In addition, IAP2 has formulated a set of fundamental principles for public participation, such as involving the public at the earliest stages and frequently throughout the decision-making process, imparting precise and succinct information and therefore ensuring that the input provided by the public is taken into account and reflected in decision-making (Rowe & Frewer 2000). These principles function as a framework for public participation professionals, guaranteeing that their programs are effectual, all-encompassing, and unambiguous.

According to Rose (2000), there are numerous "new technologies of governance" that can be identified. These include community-based governance (Rose, 2000 & Reddel, 2002), "Third Way" strategies (Giddens, 1994 & Rose, 2000), decentralisation of governance to civil society and public-private partnerships (Edwards, 2001). Despite their differences, these methods all share a common objective: involving citizens, non-governmental organizations and social movements directly and centrally in policy development and implementation (Beck, 1992 & Lane, 2006).

2.4 Co-Creation

Al-Kodmany (2001) defines the term "co-creation" as carriers of a collective effort to produce something new, although its precise interpretation can vary across different domains of application. In the realm of urban research, co-creation is conceptualized as an approach characterized by the collaborative generation of innovative outcomes facilitated by the active participation of diverse actor groups (Al-Kodmany, 2001). Co-creation and co-design are closely intertwined concepts that exhibit conceptual uncertainty. Co-design places emphasis on the active involvement of multiple stakeholders in problem-solving processes, characterized by a design-driven approach incorporating participatory principles and tools to engage diverse individuals and knowledge in addressing public issues (Bloomkamp, 2018). Co-creation encompasses two interpretations, serving as both an innovative approach and a design method. In its approach form, co-creation follows a systematic progression from problem identification to solution evaluation, emphasizing the collaborative nature of problem-solving endeavours. By initiating collaborative problem-solving and design-centric methodologies, co-creation provides a comprehensive framework for engaging stakeholders.

3. Conceptual Model

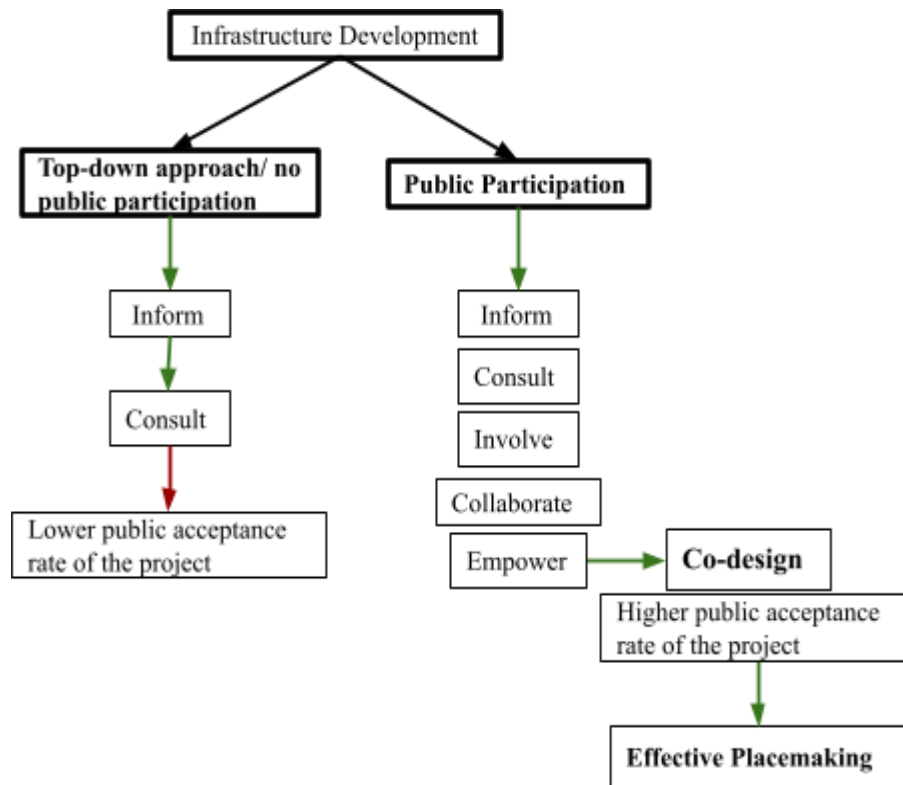


Figure 3: Conceptual Model (by author, 2023)

The Flaniermeile project forms a component of the urban development program for the Mitte district in Berlin. Its objectives encompass reducing the adverse impacts of climate change and enhancing the visual appeal of neighbourhoods. This paper specifically focuses on the Friedrichstraße, which is one part of the broader program. The project seeks to achieve its goals by implementing measures to reduce carbon emissions and enhance the aesthetic appeal of the Friedrichstraße. However, the project has encountered significant obstacles from the legal framework governing streets and traffic, as well as being highly criticised by economic actors. Consequently, the pilot phase of the project had to be terminated due to resistance from local businesses, politicians and the verdict of the court. The depicted conceptual model (refer to Figure 3) explains the association between resistance towards a project and the absence of public participation and information. It posits that in such circumstances, the project is more likely to be perceived unfavourably. The implementation of the Flaniermeile project appears to favour public participation, as acknowledged by the implementers. However, the participation of external parties remains under discussion according to the recent report by the Senat Department (berlin.de, 2023). Conversely, the model illustrates that the inclusion of public participation and co-design processes, as depicted on the right side, increases the likelihood of a positive perception among local communities. The success of the Flaniermeile project is contingent on overcoming these obstacles until the project is completely realised. Following the completion of the traffic trial phase, the Flaniermeile project is currently transitioning towards the redesign of the project area. This phase aims to involve public participation, while also considering the potential future implementation of co-decision mechanisms.

4. Research Problem

The paper focuses on the re-design of a part of the Friedrichstraße in Berlin. Between the intersection of the Französische Straße and Leipziger Straße, the street has been closed to cars and was dedicated to pedestrians. The initial pilot project took place from the 29th of August 2020 till the 31st of October 2021. The pilot project was prematurely concluded due to a lawsuit initiated by a nearby shop owner.

As of January 30th 2023, the street has been permanently designated for pedestrian use and vehicular access has been discontinued. The project has received unfavourable responses from several commercial entities and political figures. The president of the Berlin-Brandenburg trade association (Präsident des Handelsverbandes Berlin-Brandenburg) expresses himself as followed: "Anyone who wants to destroy the historic centre of Berlin in this way should perhaps look for another job" (From Kluge in Tagesspiegel, 2023). As well as the head of the FDP fraction in the Berlin state parliament criticises "On the Friedrichstraße, you can see what happens when green political childhood fantasies collide with reality" (Sebastian Czaja in Berliner Zeitung, 2022). The purpose of this paper is to explore the extent of public engagement and the various stakeholders accountable for the undertaking. Therefore the main research question is "How has public participation occurred in this case of the Flaniermeile in the Friedrichstraße Berlin?"

In order to answer the main research question, two sub-questions will follow:

1. "What is the overall perception of local communities on the project?"
2. "How did the stakeholder engagement, protest and statements influence the decision-making of the project?"



Figure 4 (left) & 5 (middle): Current stage of the project (by author, 2023) / Figure 6 (right): proposed outcome (SenUmvk, 2022)

Figure 4 displays the existing regulations implemented at the project sites, highlighting the prioritization of pedestrians, with cyclists required to ride at a reduced speed and cars strictly prohibited at all times. On the other hand, Figure 5 illustrates the current appearance of the project area. Conversely, Figure 6 presents a proposed potential outcome, portraying an envisioned transformation of the street's appearance and design.

4.1 Hypothesis

Based on the theoretical framework and the anticipated data, it is hypothesized that the planning process of the Flaniermeile demonstrates an inherent inclusion of public participation. However, the lack of essential information regarding the implementation methods, specific locations, and timing of such participation suggests a deliberate challenge in integrating non-governmental actors into the process. Furthermore, the possible resistance against the project logically aligns with the scarcity of publicly available information, indicating a correlation between the lack of transparency and

opposition to the Flaniermeile project. Despite the previously mentioned negative portrayal of the project in the press, it is crucial to obtain impartial perspectives from the project management itself.

5. Data & Methodology

5.1 Operationalization

To address the research questions, a mixed-method approach was employed. The quantitative component involved conducting surveys on Maptionnaire (refer to Appendix 9.4) and analyzing the data using SPSS. The objective was to gather responses from diverse participants, including students, parents, the elderly, visitors, residents, business owners, and young adults within the project area, in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of their overall perceptions of the project. Additionally, in-depth interviews were conducted for qualitative analysis and were coded (refer to Figure 7) using Atlas.ti (refer to Appendix 9.1-9.3 for the interview guides). The interview guide also included a separate document with questions tailored to specific target groups. By employing a mixed-method approach, the primary research question was addressed with the aim of providing comprehensive insights.

5.2 Sampling Strategies

The surveys mentioned above were utilized to gather quantitative data from a target population consisting of individuals who visited the Friedrichstraße. To achieve this objective, a systematic sampling strategy, which involved a random probability sampling approach, was employed. The sample was systematically selected from individuals present or passing by the Friedrichstraße. Data collection took place on-site at the project area itself, focusing specifically on the perception of the Flaniermeile's physical environment. Anonymity was ensured for every respondent to obtain unbiased survey results and diverse data outcomes.

For stakeholder engagement and analysis of public participation, qualitative data was derived from interviews. A non-probability sampling strategy known as selective sampling was employed to select interviewees based on specific characteristics (refer to Table 1). The first interview was scheduled with a representative from the Senate Department for the Environment, Mobility, Consumer, and Climate Protection, who was actively involved in implementing the Flaniermeile. The second interviewee was a local resident, and the third interview targeted a local business owner. Another approach to gathering qualitative data was through note-taking and participant observation during a panel discussion organized by the action group "Save the Friedrichstraße." This group aimed to preserve the car-oriented nature of the Friedrichstraße and invited the mayor, planning authorities, various members of parliament, and other stakeholders for a public discussion. The purpose of this approach was to capture public sentiment regarding the Flaniermeile project.

	Name	Gender	Relation to the Project	Opinion towards the Flaniermeile
Interviewee 1	Anja	Female	Business owner	The street must re-open for cars
Interviewee 2	Arvid	Male	Senat Department	Sees traffic trial as successful and the project as a chance to enhance livability
Interviewee 3	Alexandra	Female	Resident	In favour and excited for the renovation

Table 1: Interviewee summary (by author, 2023)

5.3 Data Analysis Schemes

5.3.1 Questionnaire Data

The methodology employed for data analysis involved observing both independent and dependent variables. Specifically, the independent variables were represented by questionnaire items addressed to the target population. On the other hand, the dependent variables referred to the responses provided by participants, which could be influenced by various factors such as their place of residence, proximity to Friedrichstraße, and perception of the Flaniermeile implementation.

To ensure consistency across respondents, the independent variable served as the control variable, with each participant being asked the same set of questions. The data included ordinal variables that aimed to assess overall satisfaction with different aspects of the project. In addition, these ordinal variables were subjected to testing in SPSS using the sign test to determine whether the satisfaction ratings on a scale of 1-5 were higher before or after the implementation of the pedestrian zone.

5.3.2 Interview Data

In order to develop an inductive code tree for the qualitative research, the literature review and formulated questions were used to identify four main variables of interest (refer to Figure 7). This approach provides a clear and comprehensive basis for analyzing the data. The first variable pertains to individuals' experiences with public participation, which will be categorized as positive, neutral, or negative. The same approach will be applied to the second and third variable, the individuals' experience during the implementation process, which is divided into positive and negative variable and the fourth variable include external factors influencing the project Flaniermeile. Specifically, various factors were examined to uncover the underlying expectations associated with positive, neutral, and negative sentiments towards the key focus points of the implementation plans. These factors were categorized into distinct groups to facilitate a comprehensive and systematic analysis of the qualitative data using coding techniques with Atlas.ti.

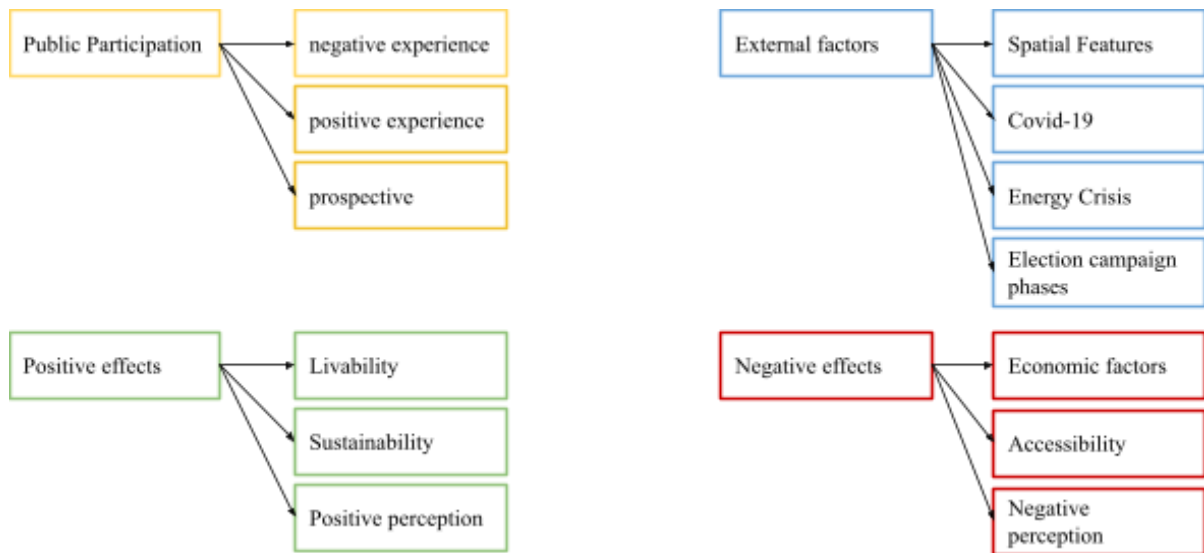


Figure 7: Code tree (by author, 2023)

5.4 Research Ethics

Furthermore, participants were explicitly informed that they had the option to withdraw their participation at any point during the interview and that such a decision would not have any negative impact on their relationship with the researcher or the study. It was emphasized that their data would be treated with utmost confidentiality (refer to Appendix 9.5), and they were assured that they could retract any information they had provided by contacting the researcher at any time.

6. Results

6.1 Descriptive Statistics

The quantitative results aim to answer the following sub-question; *What is the overall perception of local communities on the project?*

In this descriptive statistics section, the descriptive statistics relevant to answering the subquestion are discussed. In order to understand the population assessed the tables below show age, interaction behaviour and location of residence of the respondents.

How old are you?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	15-20	11	14.1	19.0	19.0
	21-25	34	43.6	58.6	77.6
	26-30	3	3.8	5.2	82.8
	31-35	1	1.3	1.7	84.5
	41-45	2	2.6	3.4	87.9
	51-55	4	5.1	6.9	94.8
	56-60	2	2.6	3.4	98.3
	61-65	1	1.3	1.7	100.0
	Total		58	74.4	100.0
Missing	System	20	25.6		
Total		78	100.0		

Table 2: Age distribution of survey respondents (by author, 2023)

How often do you visit the Friedrichstraße?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	daily	3	3.8	5.2	5.2
	weekly	9	11.5	15.5	20.7
	monthly	17	21.8	29.3	50.0
	3-4x year	13	16.7	22.4	72.4
	1-2x year	10	12.8	17.2	89.7
	never	6	7.7	10.3	100.0
	Total	58	74.4	100.0	
Missing	System	20	25.6		
Total		78	100.0		

Table 3: Indication of visiting behaviour of respondents (by author, 2023)

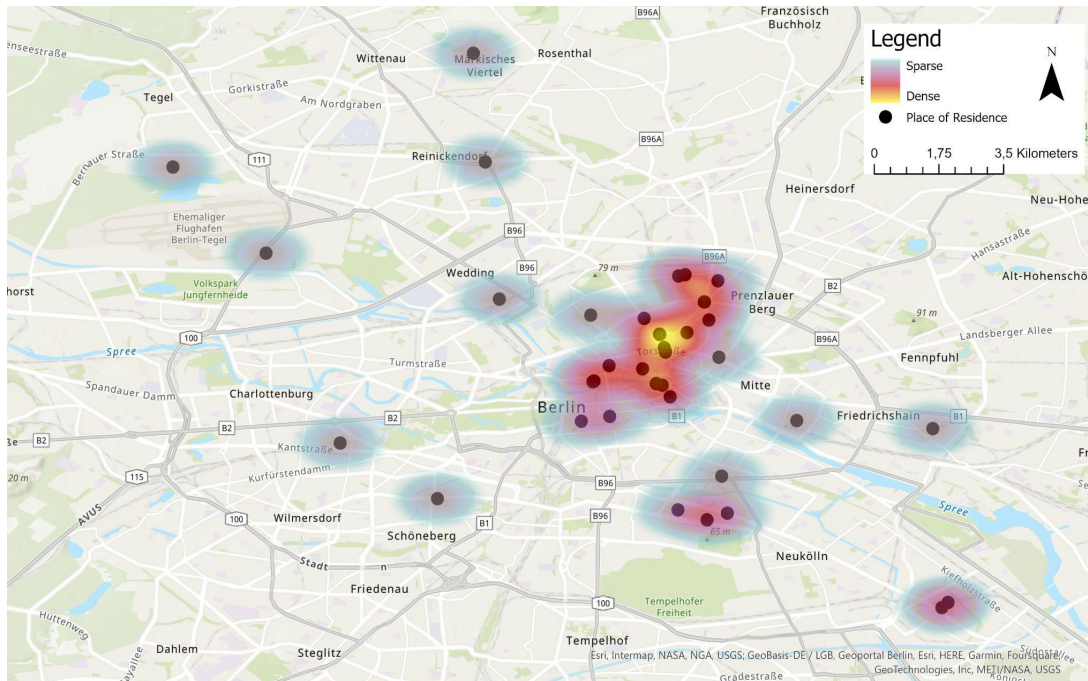


Figure 8: GIS Map of Survey Respondents Residents (by author, 2023)

The analysis of the residence map from the survey respondents reveals a noteworthy observation pertaining to their proximity to the Friedrichstraße (refer to Figure 8). The data indicates that a majority of the respondents reside in close proximity to the aforementioned area. Surprisingly, this proximity appears to have a negative impact on the frequency of visits made by the respondents. This finding raises intriguing questions about the factors that contribute to this phenomenon. One possible explanation could be that residents living in close proximity to the Friedrichstraße experience certain inconveniences or challenges that discourage frequent visits. For instance, the vehicular traffic in the area might lead to favouring other streets for socialising.

6.1.2 Sign Test

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
How satisfied are you with the Friedrichstraße as a car-oriented street?	58	1	5	2.55	.902
How satisfied are you with the Plan of the pedestrian zone?	57	1	5	4.04	.925
Valid N (listwise)	57				

Table 4: Descriptive statistics of two ordinal variables used for the sign test (by author, 2023)

Test Statistics^a

How satisfied are you with the Plan of the pedestrian zone? – How satisfied are you with the Friedrichstraße as a car-oriented street?

Z	-5.251
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001

a. Sign Test

Table 5: Sign test (by author, 2023)

The presented table provides insights into two ordinal variables, namely 'Satisfaction of car-oriented street' and 'Satisfaction with the plan of the pedestrian zone.' It is crucial to notice that the variables are coded from 1= very unsatisfied up to 5=very satisfied. Participants were asked to evaluate their own satisfaction levels before and during the redesigning process, allowing for a paired analysis. To examine the significance of the observed changes, a sign test was performed on the collected data.

The sign test serves as a non-parametric statistical method, making minimal assumptions about the underlying distribution of the data. In this case, the null hypothesis assumes that there is no difference in satisfaction levels between Friedrichstraße as a car-oriented street and Friedrichstraße as a pedestrian zone within the population. However, the obtained results reveal a statistically significant p-value of 0.001. This low p-value suggests strong evidence against the null hypothesis, leading to its rejection. Consequently, it can be inferred that there is indeed a significant difference in the perception of street usage among the local community members.

The significance of this finding lies in the fact that it highlights a shift in the community's satisfaction levels following the transformation of Friedrichstraße into a pedestrian zone. The statistically significant results indicate that the community's perception of the street has changed, and they express varying levels of satisfaction with the implementation of the pedestrian zone compared to the previous car-oriented street.

By rejecting the null hypothesis, this analysis emphasizes the importance of considering community satisfaction as a key factor in evaluating the success and acceptance of urban redevelopment projects. The significant difference in perception suggests that the transformation of the Friedrichstraße into a pedestrian zone has had a tangible impact on the community's experience and satisfaction with the street.

Frequencies

		N
How satisfied are you with the Plan of the pedestrian zone? – How satisfied are you with the Friedrichstraße as a car-oriented street?	Negative Differences ^a	5
	Positive Differences ^b	42
	Ties ^c	10
	Total	57

a. How satisfied are you with the Plan of the pedestrian zone? < How satisfied are you with the Friedrichstraße as a car-oriented street?

b. How satisfied are you with the Plan of the pedestrian zone? > How satisfied are you with the Friedrichstraße as a car-oriented street?

c. How satisfied are you with the Plan of the pedestrian zone? = How satisfied are you with the Friedrichstraße as a car-oriented street?

Table 6: Sign test (by author, 2023)

To assess the significance of the test, the provided table (refer to Table 6) provides an overview of the survey results, including negative and positive differences as well as ties. Particularly, focusing on category b, the table reveals that out of the total 57 respondents, 42 expressed a positive reaction towards the pedestrian zone compared to the car-oriented street, while 5 respondents indicated a preference for the car-oriented street. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the surveyed sample exhibits a higher level of satisfaction with the street being pedestrian-oriented.

Which implementation is most important for you?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Car Removal	28	35.9	49.1	49.1
	Added Greenery/Water features	19	24.4	33.3	82.5
	Chill out/relaxing place	10	12.8	17.5	100.0
	Total	57	73.1	100.0	
Missing	System	21	26.9		
Total		78	100.0		

Table 7: Descriptive Statics of the variable “Which implementation is most important for you” (by author, 2023)

The provided table above (refer to Table 7) presents highly important variables obtained from the survey. The aforementioned results demonstrate the population's preference for the pedestrian zone. Notably, the primary factor of utmost importance appears to be the absence of cars, then followed by the incorporation of green spaces and water features, ultimately in the establishment of a recreational area. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the community members generally hold a positive perception of the Flaniermeile project. This positive perception is particularly evident in relation to the variable of car removal, as the majority of community members express a favourable stance towards it. The sign test provides evidence supporting the preference for the pedestrian zone plan over the car-oriented street plan.

6.2 Qualitative Analysis

As the qualitative part of the research, three in-depth interviews have been conducted (refer to Table 1). Three different target groups are assessed, in order to gain insight into the views on the project of a resident, a business owner and the responsible senat department. Before analysing insights into the power relations, project management, perceptions and public participation, the spatial features of the area will be explained, since they have repetitively been mentioned and play an important role towards the understanding of the place perception.

6.2.1 Spatial Features

The city of Berlin itself describes the Friedrichstraße as a vibrant boulevard, with high-end department stores, and expensive hotels and is the home to international and luxury brands (Berlin.de, 2018). “Very chic area ... The place is chic there are high-quality customers everywhere” (Interviewee 1, 2023). Interviewee 1 highly criticises that the Friedrichstraße will not serve its customers efficiently if cars are banned. Conversely, the interviewed resident notes the disparity between the luxury-oriented character of Friedrichstraße and the social housing demographic; “Especially since this place is known for its luxury shops and rich people which just doesn't reflect the neighbourhood, we live in social housing” (Interviewee 3, 2023) remarks the social inequality, emphasizing the lack of representation for the local community. Considering the concept of placemaking, discussed earlier in section 2.2, which involves creating aesthetically pleasing, functional, and socially significant public spaces, it becomes essential to address the diverse interests and perspectives of different stakeholder groups.

6.2.2 Public Participation

To explore the dynamics of public participation, the primary focus will be on two key individuals who have been significantly impacted by the process: the business owner (Interviewee 1) and the resident (Interviewee 3). These individuals are chosen due to their direct involvement and close proximity to the project.

During the interview with Interviewee 1, it was revealed that her initial awareness of the traffic trial stemmed from media sources. She recalls that an introductory event took place before the trial in 2020, aiming to facilitate idea exchange and collective brainstorming among the residents. However, she quickly notes that during this event, it became apparent that the decision to proceed with the traffic experiment had already been made, leaving limited room for further input or influence.

"We contributed, but we were not heard" (Interviewee 1, 2023) expressed dissatisfaction with the level of attention given to their input. According to her, several meetings were held, although they quickly transitioned to online platforms due to the COVID-19 pandemic, making active participation more challenging. The interviewee, along with other business owners from Charlottenstraße, strongly criticized the rerouting of traffic into the Charlottenstraße. She highlighted that Charlottenstraße is primarily a restaurant street with 11 restaurant gardens. During the designated period, outdoor dining was relied upon, but the heavy flow of traffic limited the quality of the dining experience. She mentioned in 2023, "Cars were driving over our terraces." It is important to note that this occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic and the Charlottenstraße was designated as a bike street, indicating that cars should not have been allowed in that area. In addition, she asserts, "As the Friedrichstrasse demonstrates, it's not just about 500 meters; the impact extends for kilometres. We need to see how things change when they change drastically. No one is against creating pedestrian zones or traffic-calmed areas; just not here" (2023).

The business owner expresses significant criticism regarding accessibility, stating, "You know how important accessibility is for the retail sector." She emphasizes the need for customers to load bottles into their cars when shopping at her wine shop and emphasizes the importance of timely deliveries. Furthermore, she suggests a potential solution to the traffic congestion in her street, stating, "I would actually open Friedenstraße at least in one direction so that there is accessibility." (2023)

The resident, Interviewee 3, echoes the sentiments expressed by the business owner and states, "I somewhat became aware of it. Suddenly, overnight, everything was different, and I didn't really understand why. I didn't realize it was a project" (2023). As the project underwent a pilot phase of traffic trial followed by a temporary reopening to cars before being closed again for the implementation, the resident also remarks, "I believe having information beforehand would have been helpful, but it was also very strange that the street was closed, then open again, and then closed again" (2023). The perspectives of the resident and the business owner converge in terms of their lack of awareness and the need to seek out information about the project. Additionally, the resident was not aware of any open meetings held prior to or during the trial phase.

In the context of assessing the experiences of the business owner and resident in relation to the implementers, namely the city of Berlin, Interviewee 2 provides valuable insights that contextualize the perceived lack of public participation. Interviewee 2 asserts, "Often, the public complains in the media that no one was informed or included, but that is certainly not true in terms of assessing the traffic aspect!" (2023). According to Interviewee 2, a traffic trial can be evaluated by traffic experts, focusing primarily on calculating and understanding the impacts on the mobility network. Thus, it may appear that public participation was absent because these events were primarily intended to communicate changes in the traffic situation. Interviewee 2 further emphasizes, "However, there are indeed plans to reshape the street in the long term once the curbs disappear, which then means public participation" (2023). The planned public participation will commence when the curbs are removed, allowing construction workers to create a seamless street without sidewalks or barriers. Interviewee 2 suggests that this stage of redesign marks the beginning of public participation, and it is unlikely that

the public would be involved in the traffic trial since in Germany, the responsibility for traffic experiments generally lies with the respective municipal traffic offices or road traffic authorities, who collaborate with other relevant stakeholders such as the police, city planning offices, and traffic experts. It is important to note that this information pertains to the implementation stage, and no specific source can be referenced for the actual process. The viewpoint expressed by the senate department aligns with the concept of co-creation discussed in Section 2.4, instilling hope for a positive impact based on past experiences.

The second subquestion, "How did the stakeholder engagement, protest, and statements influence the decision-making of the project?", yielded an unexpected answer following the data collection. The stakeholder responsible for the project is the city of Berlin, specifically the Senat Department for Environment, Mobility, Climate Protection, and Consumer Protection. The protests and statements resulted in the traffic trial being taken to court, where the city of Berlin emerged victorious, thus receiving legal support for implementing the Flaniermeile. It is evident that the traffic trial took place during a politically unstable period, as highlighted by Interviewee 2, who stated, "It was the election campaign phase. Yes, it was when the attempt was almost over, the election campaign again. We are always in election campaign phases and therefore politically charged" (2023). Furthermore, Interviewee 2 remarked, "Yes, but it is really very politically charged, but that is what traffic is always like when it comes to concrete changes and when you are on the road with the people who are affected, it is a political issue" (2023). These observations align with the recurring sentiment expressed by the business owner (Interviewee 1) regarding the implementation being driven solely by the Green Party: "the Green representative for Mitte" (...) "Mr. von Dassel, our very green mayor, a cyclist and supporter, we threw a three-of-a-kind, and they actually pushed it through like that." The term "three-of-a-kind" refers to the symbolic achievement of notable card values resulting in success. These card values correspond to being a bicycle enthusiast, an environmentally conscious politician, and possessing influential authority, fitting very well together. Specifically, it pertains to the role of von Dassel in spearheading enforcement of the Flaniermeile project, while surpassing the opposition faced by those with less favourable cards.

Based on the interviews, several positive aspects can be discerned with respect to environmental considerations. Interviewee 2 highlights the reduction in vehicle usage on the street, stating, "We're talking about seven to eight thousand vehicles that no longer use this street, compared to maybe 1,500 more cyclists" (2023). Additionally, Interviewee 2 addresses the impact on Charlottenstraße, stating, "We, of course, also have effects in the side streets where there is actually more traffic and where we then also have inclines. However, in the balance of the number of affected people and then again in the comparison with a simplified estimate of the increase in noise as well as the decrease in noise, it turns out that overall the project helps, so despite the increase in traffic elsewhere, more people are relieved than burdened" (2023).

Furthermore, Interviewee 2 and the resident share a common perspective on the improved livability of the area. Interviewee 2 emphasises the project's contribution to the revitalization of public space through the promotion of pedestrian traffic (2023), while Interviewee 3 expresses the belief that the project has had a positive effect on the overall perception and experience of the place, stating, "I believe it will definitely have a calming and positive effect on everything, how one perceives the place, how it feels to walk through here. It has already changed positively. I think people will be more conscious and spend more time here because it will simply be a nicer spot" (2023).

7. Conclusion

After conducting the analysis, it becomes evident that different stakeholders hold varying intentions and desired outcomes. Shop owners prioritise the convenience of loading cars in front of their establishments, while the city of Berlin aims to pursue mobility transition and sustainability goals, measuring success by reduced emissions, decreased car usage, increased bicycle usage and improved public spaces. On the other hand, residents assess the success of the project based on the transformed nature of the place itself. It should be noted that factors such as political dynamics, the ongoing pandemic, and the energy crisis add further complexity to mobility projects.

As public participation is still an ongoing process and therefore answers the main research question, it is crucial to observe how the city addresses the challenge of reconciling the diverse interests and aspirations of different stakeholders. However, it is important to acknowledge that this aspect remains a limitation since the evaluation of such a resolution is yet to be conducted during the implementation phase. Additionally, it is worth mentioning that the survey respondents were predominantly selected based on their connection to the specific area of Berlin where the project is taking place, which could introduce a potential bias. Another weakness lies in the project's vulnerability to political influences, the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the energy crisis, all of which have contributed to the frustration experienced by affected residents.

Based on the presented conceptual model (see Figure 3) and the theoretical framework discussed in Section 2, coupled with the current phase of the project and the absence of well-defined plans for public participation, it can be argued that the project is susceptible to criticism and uncertainty from the local population. Given the current stage of the project, the implementation of the traffic trial with a top-down decision to convert the street into a pedestrian zone has led to an increase in criticism from community members. However, there is now an opportunity for public participation to commence as the city has expressed a favourable stance towards engaging the public in co-designing the street. The excitement expressed by Interviewee 3 regarding the prospect of designing her own neighbourhood signifies the potential for effective placemaking within the project. By involving the public in the design process, the project has the potential to enhance its acceptance rate among the wider community, as indicated in the conceptual model.

Considering the current state of the project and the limited public involvement, it is reasonable to anticipate concerns, reservations, and uncertainty among the local population. The absence of comprehensive public participation mechanisms can lead to a lack of trust, increased scepticism, and potential resistance from community members who feel excluded from the decision-making process. It is important to acknowledge that meaningful public participation plays a vital role in fostering transparency, building consensus, and addressing community concerns. By actively involving the local population, soliciting their input, and considering their perspectives, the project stands a greater chance of fostering positive perceptions and minimizing resistance or uncertainty.

One strength of this research lies in the adoption of a mixed-method approach, enabling the capture of diverse aspects and perceptions. Conducting on-site data collection also allows for a firsthand experience of the car-free street. Furthermore, interviewing the three most affected and involved groups adds depth and insight to the project.

Moving forward, it is recommended to conduct further research on the Flaniermeile once the economic recovery from the pandemic and energy crisis has taken place. Evaluating the project in the context of a new government in Berlin would also be valuable. Most importantly, after the project's completion, an evaluation should be conducted to assess the level of public involvement in the redesign process, as promised.

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9. Appendix

9.1 Interview Guide for Local Businessowner

Eröffnungs Fragen

- Begrüßung, Erklärung des Interviews und des Themas (unterzeichnen der Einverständniserklärung)
- Könnten Sie sich vorstellen (Berufung, Tätigkeiten, Beziehung zur Flaniermeile)

Fragen zum Pilot Projekt

- **Wann** oder beziehungsweise **wie** haben Sie von dem Projekt erfahren ?
- Gab es **Kommunikation** zwischen den Ladenbesitzern und den Projektverantwortlichen?

Bürgerbeteiligung

- Wie **verliefen** die Treffen zur Bürgerbeteiligung
- Haben Sie schonmal an **externen Treffen** zur Beteiligung teilgenommen? Besser, schlechter, konkrete Wünsche?
- Was sind **Ihre Bedenken** bezüglich der Umwandlung der Straße in eine Fußgängerzone?
- Welche **Vorteile** sehen Sie durch die Umwandlung der Straße in eine Fußgängerzone für Ihr Geschäft?
- Wie wird die Umwandlung der Straße in eine Fußgängerzone den **Kundenverkehr und die Kundenbindung in Ihrem Geschäft beeinflussen?**
- Haben Sie **Veränderungen** im Konsumverhalten seit der Umsetzung festgestellt?
- Haben Sie aufgrund der **Autobeschränkung Schwierigkeiten erlebt?**

Schlussfragen

- Glauben Sie das die Friedrichstraße eine **Veränderung nötig** hat? Irgendwas bestimmtes?
- Hätten Sie eine **andere Sicht** auf das Projekt wenn sie dort kein Geschäft hätten?
- Gibt es noch etwas, was Sie **erwähnen** möchten ?

9.1.1 English Version

Opening Questions

- Greetings, explanation of the interview and the topic (signing the consent form)
- Could you please introduce yourself (profession, activities, relationship to the promenade)

Questions about the Pilot Project

- When or how did you hear about the project?
- Was there communication between the shop owners and the project managers?

Citizen Participation

- How did the citizen participation meetings go?
- Have you ever participated in external meetings for participation before? Better, worse, specific wishes?
- What are your concerns regarding the conversion of the street into a pedestrian zone?
- What are the benefits you see for your business from the conversion of the street into a pedestrian zone?

- How will the conversion of the street into a pedestrian zone affect customer traffic and customer loyalty in your business?
- Have you noticed any changes in consumer behaviour since the implementation?
- Have you experienced any difficulties due to the car restrictions?

Closing Questions

- Do you think that Friedrichstraße needs a change? Anything specific?
- Would you have a different perspective on the project if you didn't have a business there?
- Is there anything else you would like to mention?

9.2 Interview Guide for Senat Department

Eröffnungsfragen

- Begrüßung, Erklärung des Interviews und des Themas (unterzeichnen der Einverständniserklärung)
- Könnten Sie sich vorstellen (Berufung, Tätigkeiten, Beziehung zur Flaniermeile)

Frage zum Pilotprojekt

- Welche Interessenten Gruppen sind am meisten involviert? (Firmen, Investoren, etc.)
- Wie wurden die Anwohner und Geschäftsinhaber in den Planungsprozess einbezogen? (öffentliche Konsultationen oder Bürgerbeteiligung)
- Was waren die wichtigsten Faktoren, die bei der Entscheidung berücksichtigt wurden, die Straße in eine Fußgängerzone umzuwandeln?
- Welche **Herausforderungen** wurden bei der Umwandlung der Straße in eine Fußgängerzone erwartet, und wie wurden diese Herausforderungen angegangen?

Fragen zur Flaniermeile

- Im Pilotprojekt handelte es sich um eine **Fahrradstraße**, warum gab es die Veränderung zur Fußgängerzone?
- Gibt es momentan eine Möglichkeit für **Bürgerbeteiligung**?
- Wie wird die Umwandlung der Straße in eine Fußgängerzone zur Verbesserung der **Lebensqualität** in der Umgebung beitragen? (Vorteile für die Bewohner und Besucher)
- Wie wird die Fußgängerzone die **sozialen Beziehungen und die Gemeinschaft** in der Umgebung stärken? (geplante Veranstaltungen oder Aktivitäten)
- Wie wird die Umwandlung der Straße in eine Fußgängerzone die **wirtschaftliche Entwicklung** der Umgebung beeinflussen?

Mobilität

- Wie wird die Umwandlung der Straße in eine Fußgängerzone die Mobilität und den **Zugang zu anderen Teilen der Umgebung** verbessern?
- Gibt es Pläne für den **Ausbau öffentlicher Verkehrsmittel**, um den Verkehr zu verringern?

Schlussfragen

- Gibt es weitere Pläne für die Umwandlung von Straßen in Fußgängerzonen in der Gemeinde? (wenn ja, wo?)
- Gibt es noch etwas, was Sie erwähnen möchten ?

- Vielen Dank

9.2.1 English Version

Opening Questions

- Greetings, explanation of the interview and the topic (signing the consent form)
- Could you please introduce yourself (profession, activities, relationship to the promenade)

Questions about the Pilot Project

- Which interest groups are most involved? (companies, investors, etc.)
- How were the residents and business owners involved in the planning process? (public consultations or citizen participation)
- What were the key factors considered in the decision to convert the street into a pedestrian zone?
- What challenges were expected in the conversion of the street into a pedestrian zone, and how were these challenges addressed?

Questions about the Flaniermeile

- In the pilot project, it was a bicycle street, why was there a change to a pedestrian zone?
- Is there currently an opportunity for citizen participation?
- How will the conversion of the street into a pedestrian zone contribute to improving the quality of life in the area? (benefits for residents and visitors)
- How will the pedestrian zone strengthen social relationships and the community in the area? (planned events or activities)
- How will the conversion of the street into a pedestrian zone affect the economic development of the area?

Mobility

- How will the conversion of the street into a pedestrian zone improve mobility and access to other parts of the area?
- Are there plans to expand public transportation to reduce traffic?

Closing Questions

- Are there any other plans for converting streets into pedestrian zones in the community? (if yes, where?)
- Is there anything else you would like to mention?
- Thank you.

9.3 Interview Guide for Resident

Opening questions:

- Wie heißen Sie und wie alt sind Sie? Was ist Ihr Beruf und was machen Sie konkret?
- Wie sind Sie mit dem Projekt Flaniermeile verbunden?

1. Wie ist Ihre Erfahrung mit der Friedrichstraße ohne Implementierungen

- Wie gefällt es Ihnen, auf der Straße zu sein? (Was mögen Sie, was mögen Sie nicht, was vermissen Sie?)
- Welchen Wert hat die Straße für Sie?
- Was machen Sie dort, wenn Sie dort sind?
- Denken Sie, dass es ein angenehmes Gebiet zum Verweilen ist?

2. Was sind Ihre Erwartungen an die Friedrichstraße während der Implementierungs-/Pilotphase der Flaniermeile

- Denken Sie, dass die Implementierung zu vielen Störungen führen wird? (z. B. lange Bauzeit bis zur Öffnung für Fußgänger)
- Wird die Renovierung sich direkt auf Sie auswirken?
- Haben Sie Schwierigkeiten aufgrund der Autoeinschränkung erlebt? (Baustellen oder dem Projekt im Allgemeinen?)
- Haben Ihre Besucher Probleme erlebt?

3. Das vorgeschlagene Ergebnis der Flaniermeile

- Sind Sie für die Implementierungen?
- Glauben Sie, dass es notwendig ist?
- Haben Sie sich während des Planungsprozesses beteiligt?
- Wissen Sie, welche Stakeholder beteiligt sind?
- Denken Sie, dass es zum Platz passt, den die Friedrichstraße innerhalb der Stadt einnimmt (Nähe zum Brandenburger Tor, Checkpoint Charlie usw.)?

4. Anwohnerinnen

- Gab es eine Kommunikation zwischen Anwohnern und Projektbetreuern?
- Möchten Sie eine Fußgängerzone vor Ihrer Wohnung haben?
- Was hätte besser gemacht werden können?
- Wie werden Sie mit der Friedrichstraße interagieren, wenn das Projekt umgesetzt wird? (öfters dort sitzen, zetiverbringen, weniger etc.)
- Wie wird sich dies Menschen in der Nähe verändern?

Abschließende Fragen:

- Möchten sie noch etwas hinzufügen?

9.3.1 English Version

Opening Questions:

- What is your name and age? What is your profession and what do you do specifically?
- How are you connected to the Promenade project?

Your Experience with Friedrichstraße without Implementations:

- What is your experience with Friedrichstraße without any implementations?
- How do you like being on the street? (What do you like, what do you dislike, what do you miss?)
- What value does the street have for you?
- What do you do there when you are there?
- Do you think it is a pleasant area to stay in?

Your Expectations for Friedrichstraße during the Implementation/Pilot Phase of the Flaniermeile:

- Do you think the implementation will cause a lot of disruptions? (e.g., long construction time until pedestrian opening)
- Will the renovation directly affect you?
- Have you experienced difficulties due to the car restrictions? (construction sites or the project in general?)
- Have your visitors encountered any problems?

The Proposed Outcome of the Promenade:

- Are you in favour of the implementations?
- Do you think it is necessary?
- Have you been involved in the planning process?
- Do you know which stakeholders are involved?
- Do you think it fits the role that Friedrichstraße plays within the city (proximity to Brandenburg Gate, Checkpoint Charlie, etc.)?

Residents:

- Was there communication between residents and project managers?
- Would you like to have a pedestrian zone in front of your apartment?
- What could have been done better?
- How will you interact with Friedrichstraße once the project is implemented? (sit there more often, spend less time there, etc.)
- How will this change people in the vicinity?

Closing Questions:

- Is there anything else you would like to add?

9.4 Maptionnaire

The survey is centred on the segment of Friedrichstraße, spanning from Französische Straße to Leipzigerstraße, which has been designated as the "Flaniermeile". This particular section is currently undergoing a transformation from a vehicular-centred zone to a pedestrian-friendly zone. Filling out the questions will take about 5 minutes. Your responses will remain anonymous at all times. If you have any questions regarding the survey, feel free to contact me via h.m.von.der.ohe@student.rug.nl

Basic information:

1. How old are you?
2. What do you do for a living? (student, worker, retired)
3. Do you live in Berlin? If yes-> indicate on the map

How they interact with the Flaniermeile:

1. How often do you visit Friedrichstraße?

- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Three or four times a year
- Once or twice a year
- Never I try to avoid it

2. Why do you go to the Friedrichstraße?

- Passing through (By foot, bike or car)
- Socializing and going out
- Sightseeing
- Shopping
- Events (demonstrations, concerts, etc.)
- Other

3. How satisfied are you with the Friedrichstraße as a car-oriented street (before completion)?

- Not at all satisfied
- Unsatisfied
- Neutral
- Satisfied
- Very much satisfied

How do you feel about the current plans of the Flaniermeile: (section 8.1, figure 2) Since the 30th of January 2023, the Friedrichstraße is undergoing the process of becoming a pedestrian zone. The plan for the Flaniermeile encounters

- added greenery
- added water features
- seating possibilities

Below you can find an image of the proposed outcome and a detailed plan of project

4. How do you feel about the car removal?

- Very Unsatisfied
- Unsatisfied
- Neutral
- Satisfied
- Very much satisfied

5. What do you think of the plan to add more greenery and water features to the Friedrichstraße?

- Not at all satisfied
- Unsatisfied
- Neutral
- Satisfied
- Very unsatisfied

6. Which implementation is most important to you?

- Car removal
- Greenery
- Seating possibilities

7. Do you think the implementation will affect the interaction with the Friedrichstraße in the future?

- Yes, I think I would visit the street more often
- Yes, I will visit the street less often
- Neutral, I do not know if my interaction will change
- No, I will not change my interaction with the street

8. Is there anything you would like to add?

9.5 Interview consent form template

Consent Form

I have received details regarding the research objective and engaged in a conversation regarding the methodology of the interview with Helena von der Ohe, who is conducting research as part of her Bachelor Thesis in Human Geography and Planning at the Faculty of Spatial Sciences, Rijksuniversiteit Groningen.

Research purpose

I acknowledge that the forthcoming interview will encompass inquiries regarding my viewpoints and outlook pertaining to the Project Flaniermeile, and how it has influenced my perception of the locality. The interview will be transcribed and documented in digital format. It is important to note that the interview outcomes are exclusively intended for academic purposes, and will be employed in a thesis, confined to an educational milieu.

By signing below, I, _____, am indicating that I:

Understand the purpose of the research

Have been given the time to ask questions about the research

Understand that the results of the interview will not be distributed, only be used for educational purposes

Understand that my participation in this interview is voluntary and refusal to participate in this interview can be done at any time

Signature of the participant:

Date:

9.6 Syntax

* Encoding: UTF-8.

```
DATASET ACTIVATE DataSet1.
```

```
DESCRIPTIVES VARIABLES=HowsatisfiedareyouwiththeFriedrichstraßasacarorientedstreet
```

```
    HowsatisfiedareyouwiththePlanofthepedestrianzone
```

```
  /STATISTICS=MEAN STDDEV MIN MAX.
```

```
DATASET ACTIVATE DataSet1.
```

```
DESCRIPTIVES VARIABLES=HowsatisfiedareyouwiththeFriedrichstraßasacarorientedstreet
```

```
    HowsatisfiedareyouwiththePlanofthepedestrianzone
```

```
  /STATISTICS=MEAN STDDEV MIN MAX.
```

```
NPAR TESTS
```

```
  /SIGN=HowsatisfiedareyouwiththeFriedrichstraßasacarorientedstreet WITH
```

```
    HowsatisfiedareyouwiththePlanofthepedestrianzone (PAIRED)
```

```
  /STATISTICS DESCRIPTIVES
```

```
  /MISSING ANALYSIS.
```

```
FREQUENCIES          VARIABLES=Howoldareyou          DoyouliveinBerlin  
HowoftendoyouvisittheFriedrichstraße
```

```
  /STATISTICS=STDDEV MEAN
```

```
  /ORDER=ANALYSIS.
```

```
FREQUENCIES VARIABLES=Whichimplementationismostimportantforyou
```

```
  /STATISTICS=STDDEV MEAN
```

```
  /FORMAT=LIMIT(10)
```

```
  /ORDER=ANALYSIS.
```