Quality of Life:
Ranking and Planning in the Internet Age

	Effective Administration	Advanced Economy	Appealing Environment
1	Stockholm	Tokyo	Rome
2	Melbourne	New York	Paris
3	Sydney	Berlin	Barcelona
4	Tokyo	London	Vienna
5	Zurich	Stockholm	London
6	Geneva	Zurich	New York
7	Berlin	Geneva	Sydney
8	London	Melbourne	Amsterdam
9	Copenhagen	Sydney	Venice
10	New York	Hong Kong	Prague

Source: https://placebrandobserver.com/marcas-ciudad-mas-fuertes-del-mundo-2015/ranking-marcas-ciudad-city-reptrak-2015-resultados-por-categoria/

Let´s imagine, you can choose to life and work in any city you want, how would you get the information for making your choice?

How would you choose your residence inside the city?

Let´s collect the answers!

… and check for:

Walkability vs. car-centric

Print, TV, Cinema or Social Media

Economy?

What makes a city cool?

Selection of the Neighbourhood?

City rankings

- Today, there are several city rankings, trying to give orientation to movers about...
  - Safety
  - Administration
  - Economy
  - Education (important for parents)
  - Quality of Life
- Methods, used data, data processing and regional coverage vary greatly – as do the results
- Examples are
- https://www.bestcities.org/
- https://www.afar.com/magazine/best-cities-in-the-world
- https://www.timeout.com/things-to-do/best-cities-in-the-world

An example from bestcities:

64. Taipei – A stealthy Asian capital ascends rapidly.

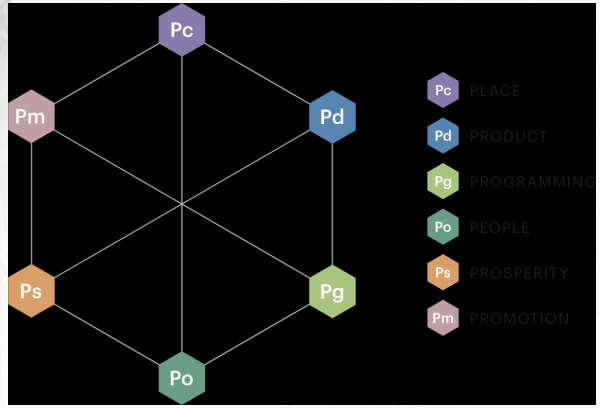
Population, Metro: 9,078,000
Highlighted Rankings: Programming, Prosperity
See Methodology

This is the first time that Taiwan's capital appears in our Top 100, and it does so with style, improving by 46 spots to debut solidly middle-of-the-pack, led by its stealthy culinary chops and understated prosperity. Taipei has, over the past decade, emerged as one of Asia's magnetic cities among those who know. The ambitious and developing metropolis is a more accessible and affordable Hong Kong or Tokyo, with restaurants to match. The proof is in the xiao long bao, or soup dumpling, at local restaurant legend Din Tai Fung, home to, if local lore is to be believed, the best dumplings in the world. It's decades-old favorites like this that help Taipei's restaurants rank #9 globally. But the city is also a global shopping destination (ranking #14) buoyed as much by its myriad haute boutiques and the global chains in the luxe Ximending area as by the serpentine electronics bazaar of the Guang Hua Digital Plaza. The sense of livability for a city this large is threaded together by fantastic public transit—soon to be improved further with the new Circular Line—and casual affluence (not to mention almost non-existent unemployment, courtesy of the 15th-highest number of Global 500 companies in town).

Source: https://www.bestcities.org/rankings/worlds-best-cities/ , retrieved 24th, Aug. 2022

… and here is, how they get to this score:

https://www.bestcities.org/methodology/



How sound do you find this Methodology?

Walk Score™

- In many rankings, walkability is a factor
- As you might guess, there is a ranking for walkability, too
- …but this is academically more sound, using Google Maps data to calculate the amount of services one can use from a specific address
- For example: https://www.walkscore.com/

Real Estate Prizes, Rankings and Traffic

- Real Estate Prizing often works counter-intuitive:
  - commuter costs actually lower land prizes
  - improvements in public transport and walkability put a premium on the location
  - As do sub-centers, who provide some of the functions of the main center
  - it´s not only demand and supply, it´s also that a share of the reduced transport costs are making up some of the RE value
- High rankings often lead to higher RE prizes, too
- Modern Information technology allows to compute prizes by location and object structures and to know the prize structure of a place

Overview prize chart in uni-polar and multi-polar cities

(That´s a note for me, my dear students)

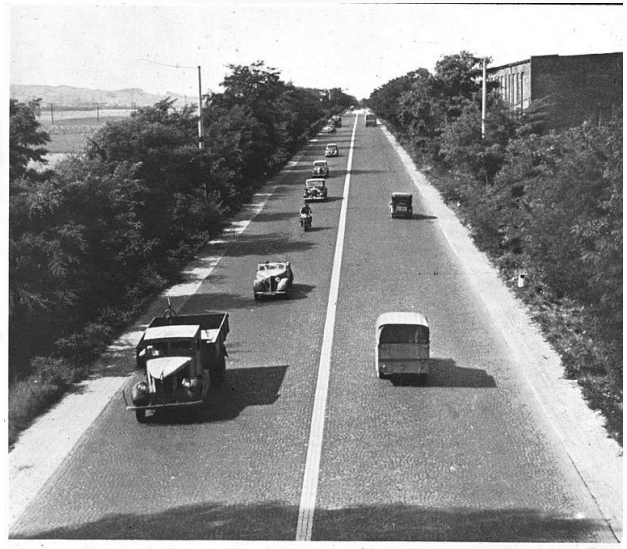
European Solutions

Woonerf
and
„Freie Fahrt für freie Bürger“
(“Free way for free Citizens“)

Differences between Europe and the U.S.

- The motorization of the society came later and slower
- It was preceded by an intense debate Industry and cultural – most European countries saw legislation to safeguard cultural heritage before the first car rolled down the street
- Higher densities and small scale structures made it more difficult to establish a car-centred planning approach

The Autobahn



BASALTKLEINPFLASTER MIT FUGENVERGUSS AUF DER KRAFTWAGENSTRASSE BONN–KÖLN

The Autobahn

- In 1932, the first European motorways were built in Germany, connecting two major cities along the Rhine
- Other countries soon followed – these streets were seen as vital infrastructure in case of war
- The Autobahn was a street never seen before: An exclusive way for just one mode of transport, like a railway for cars.
- It also meant, car ownership and its advantages were greatly subsidized with tax money – Cars First!

Unquestionable modern:
Ruth Landshoff in front of *her* car in the 1920´s

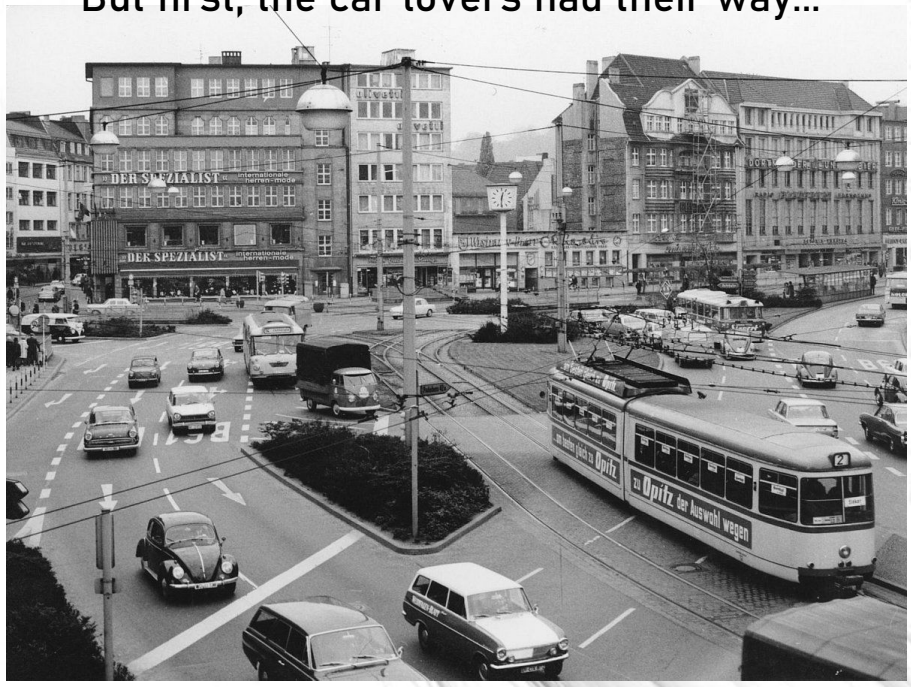
Like in the U.S.

- Like in the U.S., the car was at the center of the wildest urban planner´s dreams to rebuild the city after World War I
- You have already seen approaches from the functionalist planning school...
- What made this planning "fantastic" in the sense of the word: Only a small part of the population actually had a car (less than one percent of the households)
- But: This small group was the jet set: The sexy, young, fast and rich kids, like Ruth Landshoff, who wrote about being a "girl driver"
- Modernity, like gender equality, individual freedom, and an independent lifestyle were connected to the car

Thanks to the War...

- The second World War laid many urban centers in Europe into ruins
- What was first utopical, became now a possibility and functionalist planners destroyed in most of Europe more old built substance than the war – for building cities designed for the car
- But: The Europeans hadn´t that much money
- And a negative feedback immediately set in
- Unlike the U.S., critics of a car centered development gained strong public support

But first, the car lovers had their way…



…before the alternatives fixed the car problems

- It took several decades from the 60´s well into the 80´s, before planning considered multi-modal concepts without public pressure
- The most innovative concepts came from the Netherlands and Scandinavian countries
- The basic idea was simple: **The car does not get special privilege**, pedestrians and bicycles have a right to the city, too
- But still: Most urban traffic planning is still car planning in many cities

Solutions: The Woonerf

- The Woonerf is originally a residential street concept
- Anyone had to share the existing space
- Cars are not privileged in their right of way or have the right to speed
- Narrow streets, bad visibility make driving difficult
- The concept was also used for many small city and village centers (too small for a pedestrian area)

Solutions: The Woonerf

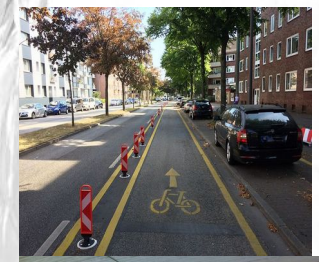
Solutions: The Pedestrian Area

- Especially in old city cores of large cities
- Even Bicycles are tolerated there at best
- They draw a lot of customers, especially on days with good weather
- The shopping mall is designed after them
- Delivery traffic only early in the morning

Universities and Bicycles

- Unlike the U.S. and Taiwan, Universities in Europe are often **not** Campus Universities
- Their buildings are scattered all over the town – students had to move in between classes
- To be on time, the bicycle is first choice
- University cities played a key role in developing bike friendly infrastructure (bike lanes, etc.)

Bike-friendly Infrastructure



- More Bikes mean less cars – at least sometimes (good weather, for example)
- Bikes make drivers also more careful
- Especially in flat areas, the bicycle is a solution to traffic issues – if there are safe bike lanes and parking for bikes

☜ A bicycle parkhouse

Park and Ride

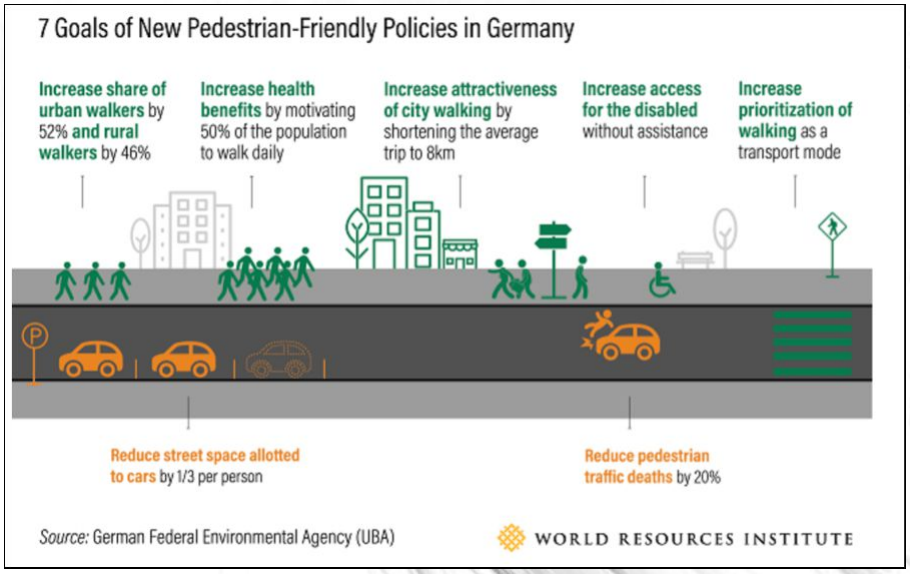
- First established in Oxford (University Town) in the 1960´s
- Then soon taken over by airports
- Located at the edges of cities, close to public transport
- Allows less cars in the city center
- Less congestion and stress for the driver
- Drop off zones are often called „Kiss and Ride“

General Ideas in Europe

- Generally speaking, Europeans are much more willing to reduce driving **in cities** – and to back that politically
- Congestion tax put a prize tag on driving into city centers
- Traffic calming (from German „Verkehrsberuhigung“) narrows roads and uses speed humps, non-straight roads and pavement to slow down traffic
- Mixed use zones generally reduce traffic volume
- Sidewalks and a walkable environment do so, too

Thank you for Listening!

Walkability and Politics



The Controversy

- In many communities, increasing walkability is a highly contested issue
- Taking away space for cars and motorcycles fuels fears of losing jobs in retail, the argument is: „Customers can´t come to the shop“
- The geographic outcomes of car-centred and multi-modal approaches are very different

Walkability

- Refers to safe accessibilty by non-motorized modes of moving (walking and bicycling)
- Walkability is connected with a multitude of urban parameters, like land use zoning, street grid, street design and public transport

Land Use Zoning for Walkability

- For Walkability, land use zoning had to prioritize mixed use and small grain structures
- This leads to high complexity, it also means a much more complex ownership structure:
  - small, owner-operated shops
  - Less department stores
  - No, or only a few Big Box stores (like IKEA)
- A strong preference for central locations

Land Use Zoning for Car-Centered Development

- For Car-centered development, land use zoning had to prioritize single use and usually prefers large scale structures, with sufficient parking and easily accessible by car
- This leads to low complexity and a very simple ownership structure:
  - Large, often international companies, who are represented by managers
  - Big Box development: Large buildings with a lot of parking space, located near arterial roads and Freeways
  - Low complexity and not walkable due to the distances

Road Design for Car-Centered Development

- For Car-centered development, road design prefers the VMT approach: success is measured by Vehicle Miles Travel and the time needed for it (going further and faster is better)
- It prefers high speed roads with multiple lanes
- Other, slower modes of transport might be tolerated and assigned minimal road space and low priority or forbidden (Freeways)
- The huge amount of fast moving cars makes this environment very dangerous for anyone, who is not driving

Road Design for a Walkable Environment

- In a walkable environment, things look very different.
- Top priority is not management of traffic, but traffic avoidance by giving people options closer to their residence
- It prefers wide sidewalks and separated bicycle lanes, with minimum road space for cars
- Roads are designed for accessibility of Trucks, not for speed
- Drivers get the lowest priority, as does parking, and speeding is strictly controlled to ensure the safety of other road users

A Big Box store, often located at the edges of the City

A walkable area, often located near the city center

Big vs. Small

- Both design approaches are **not** mutually exclusive
- A large City can easily accommodate and support walkable and car-oriented areas
- Small cities often don´t have problems with traffic density in the city center
- Mid-size cities have a problem: Big Box stores at the edges could end retail in the inner city and create structural problems

Economic Benefits?

- While a walkable environment has great benefits for public health and creates jobs in retail, it is also less dependent on decisions of outsiders (local shop owners)
- Driving and car-centered development on the other hand creates health problems (Driving causes cardiovascular problems, obesity and psychological imbalance, or in other words, drivers are mad and fat)
- ...but, the car-industry is a job machine: Most people spend far more than necessary for their cars (e.g. audio-systems, tuning, fashion items) and maintenance also creates more jobs than public transport could do.