

In many parts of Dutch cities, and some traffic calmed precincts in Germany, residential streets are now places where cars must give way to pedestrians. In these areas, residents are accepting the view that the function of streets is not solely to provide mobility for cars. Streets may also be for social interaction, walking, cycling and playing. One of the most important aspects of these European cities, in terms of giving cities back to children, has been a range of 'traffic calming' initiatives, aimed at reducing the volume and speed of traffic. These initiatives have had complex interactive effects, leading to a sense that children have been able to 'recapture' their local neighbourhood, and more importantly, that they have been able to do this in safety. Recent research has demonstrated that children in many German cities have significantly higher levels of freedom to travel to places in their own neighbourhood or city than children in other cities in the world.