

IC - (21129) - DESIGNING CITIES FOR SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY MINDSETS

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Background and objectives

The concept of sustainability in mobility has gained a new momentum when faced with a new pandemic challenge that required cities to adapt to a new reality of confinement and limited mobility. Issues such as traffic congestion, air and noise pollution and resulting climate change and health problems that were once pushing for more sustainable means of transportation to be prevalent in cities, may now suffer a setback when social distancing is a new norm for personal safety. This thesis aimed to contribute to the discussion of this problem by assessing the impact of different urban designs on the mobility mindsets of the population and how these mobility mindsets in turn affect dialogue and collective problem solving when dealing with the allocation of public space towards different modes of transportation.

Process and methods (for empirical research)

Through an online survey open for the Portuguese population, individual and family interviews and mindset segregated workshops, it was possible to identify the main design characteristics associated with each of the four mindsets, as well as their tolerance of others.

Main results (or main arguments in the case of critical reviews)

It was found that Fixed and Car-Oriented Mindsets (24% of survey respondents) resided in areas with few attributes that efficiently supported other alternatives of mobility and, consequently, instilled a denigrated vision of users of those alternatives, along with a lower acceptance of new sustainable policies that affected their day-to-day mobility. Growth and Alternative Modes-Oriented Mindsets (19%) tended to live in city centres with a high level of accessibility and a high diversity and quality of public spaces.

Implications for research and practice/policy | Importance and originality of the contribution

This resulting insight of how the environment affects the way we think, decide and support sustainable modes of transportation can help tailor municipalities' mobility strategies, not only while facing emergent challenges like a pandemic, but also long-term problems such as climate change, both being threats to the health and sustainability of the future.

Palavras-chave : Mobility Mindsets, Urban Design, Urban Planning, Participatory Planning