

Research plan

25 May 2026



Background

Many cities have organized street experiments, particularly in the past 10 years. These can offer valuable opportunities to improve sustainability or vibrance of urban space by testing a concept at first or to create a temporary boost. As these experiments are relatively small in scale, their impact assessments are typically similarly relatively small. However, impact assessment is important for learning from the experiment and understanding their capacity to transform (e.g. VanHoose et al., 2022). Evaluation is also essential for ensuring transparency (e.g. Dziekan et al., 2013).

There have not been studies on street experiments from Finnish cities, and in general studies on experiments in Nordic cities has been limited. Also, particularly quality of analysis is a perspective that has rarely been studied. For example, Umstattd Meyer et al. (2019) analyzed quality alongside the impacts of experiments. This thesis would show studies that seem ambitious in their objectives or where more permanent change has resulted.

Examples of relevant literature:

- Document analysis of experiments from a different field: *Kivimaa et al. (2017) Experiments in climate governance – A systematic review of research on energy and built environment transitions*
- Study describing the elements of street experiments: *Kinigadner, J., Büttner, B., Rivas de Gante, A., & Aumann, S. (2024). How to transform urban spaces and mobility: a framework for analysing street experiments.*
- A similar study of a synthesis of street experiments including an evaluation of quality: *Umstattd Meyer, M. R., Bridges, C. N., Schmid, T. L., Hecht, A. A., & Pollack Porter, K. M. (2019). Systematic review of how Play Streets impact opportunities for active play, physical activity, neighborhoods, and communities.*
- Basic elements of impact evaluation: *Dziekan et al. (2013) Evaluation matters - A practitioners' guide to sound evaluation for urban mobility measures*
- Other general papers related to the topic:

- *Smeds, E., & Papa, E. (2023). The value of street experiments for mobility and public life: Citizens' perspectives from three European cities.*
- *Bertolini, L. (2020). From "streets for traffic" to "streets for people": can street experiments transform urban mobility?*

Other useful sources:

- Global Street Design Guide: Measuring and Evaluating Streets
<https://globaldesigningcities.org/publication/global-street-design-guide/measuring-evaluating-streets/>

Research questions

The main research question is:

How have the effects of recent street experiments been reported and evaluated across selected case studies in Nordic cities?

The second aim of the study is to assess the quality of impact evaluation practices in these experiments based on the evaluation reports and semi-structured interviews.

Scope

In this thesis the term *street experiment* refers to temporary intervention with potential to inform or lead to permanent change. This could mean that the experiment differs from dominant practices, it has been repeated or informs permanent intervention.

The analysis focuses on street experiments that have been conducted in Finland, Sweden, Denmark or Norway. Cities may be larger (e.g. Helsinki, Stockholm) or at least medium-sized (e.g. Pori).

The experiments also exhibit a clear link to mobility or street space change. School streets and short festival-like concepts¹ are excluded from study as they have distinct characteristics.

Due to the limited scope of a master's thesis, case selection is not systematic. Instead, cases from several cities have been selected to find examples that possibly represent different analysis practices. Some small changes to the sample are possible.

¹ E.g. Temporary urban space in Ørestad South, Copenhagen, in 2021 before the construction started is an experiment, but it does not have a strong link to sustainable urban spaces:
<https://byoghavn.dk/midlertidige-byrum-paa-asger-jorns-alle/>

Sample

The study will consist of approximately ten cases (see Appendix in the last pages of this file) from Nordic cities, making the scope feasible while allowing for comparison across different contexts.

A key challenge is that the experiments may have varying goals and this influences impact assessment. During the analysis, I will group the experiments. One possible approach is that the cases will be selected to represent different types of experiments, including:

- mobility-oriented interventions (e.g. traffic calming, cycling infrastructure),
- public space activation,
- process-oriented or exploratory experiments.

If this is not successful, the cases will be treated as separate experiments or discussed by country.

One important restriction is that the evaluation report has been published and final conclusions have been made. Some experiments do not meet this criterion. Pori summer street experiment will be discussed separately as a case study in the discussion. It is a particularly interesting case because, despite the relatively limited impact assessment, there are now plans to make the pedestrian street permanent. This case will be studied by interviewing representatives from City of Pori.

Data

1) Documents

- Evaluation reports
- City council (kaupunginvaltuusto) documents
- Other publicly available materials or materials that directly requested from the city administrations

If the report is in language I don't understand I will translate the documents with some tool that is available online for free.

2) Semi-structured interviews

Interviews of people from city administrations who have been involved in the projects. Also, interviews with other experts will be included if this seems necessary to add perspective to the analysis.

If interviews prove difficult to arrange, for example, due to the busy schedules of interviewees, some interviews may be conducted via email, using pre-selected questions.

Analysis method

There are two main elements in the analysis:

1) Analysis of experiments

Document analysis of the experiments by including many aspects such as listed in table below.

Table 1: Examples of variables that will be recorded in the analysis.

Parameter	Definition
Location	City and country
Spatial context	City center / suburban neighborhood etc.
Year and duration	Time of the experiment
Design	Physical design and its elements
Stated objectives	Objectives and aims of the experiment
Impacts and evidence	What types of impacts were recorded and how those results were found
Methodology	What types of methods are used to form the results

2) Evaluation of quality including a framework for the assessment

The literature review will include a summary of good elements in evaluation and example how quality of studies has been analyzed previously. Based on this, a framework will be constructed for the evaluation of quality.

Possible dimensions include:

- Sample size
- Methodology
- The scope of the impact assessment
- Does the impact assessment provide answers to the aims

At the end, the studies will be assessed according to the constructed framework.

Discussion (draft at this stage)

Some ideas of themes that will be relevant to discuss after the analysis

- Is impact assessment necessary for transformation? By using the example from Pori that is supported with interviews, the argument is that transformation does not require significant impact assessment.
- To what extent does quality of the analysis depend on the goals set for the experiment and other external factors? There are drivers and barriers in conducting experiments and impact assessments.

Limitations of the study

The analysis is primarily based on published documents. While those provide relevant information, they do not fully reveal how and why certain decisions were made. Some perspectives may have been underrepresented in the reports.

It is difficult to group experiments into fully distinct categories; some cases may overlap.

The focus on Nordic cities limits the scope, and relevant examples from other regions may be excluded.

Advice and supervision during the process

Three components:

- **Steering group:** at least one member from City of Tampere, City of Pori and Traficom. Advisor(s) will participate when it seems necessary.
- **Advisors:** [REDACTED] (FLOU Oy) and [REDACTED]
- **Supervisor:** [REDACTED]

Advisors and supervisor support in meeting the requirements of a master's thesis.

Timetable

The thesis will be finished by the end of November.

The thesis evaluation application deadlines in autumn are the following: 28.9.2026, 23.11.2026 and 31.12.2026. I will hand in my thesis by mid-November for the 23.11. deadline. The degree programme committee meeting is on 14.12.2026 and I will receive confirmation on the grade after that.

Table 2: Preliminary schedule.

Description	May	June	July	August	September	October	November
Finalizing the literature review							
Finalizing the sample							
Interviews							
Document analysis							
Quality of the studies							
Writing							
<i>Suggestion on the meetings of the steering group (ohjausryhmä)*</i>	<i>Late May</i>	<i>Mid-June (progress update)</i>		<i>Late August (progress update)</i>		<i>Early October (final comments)</i>	
<i>Supervisor meetings (contact person from the university)</i>		<i>Early June</i>		<i>Late August</i>		<i>Mid-October</i>	

* The frequency of the meetings can be decided by the steering group.

Appendix

Table 3: Draft of the experiments that would be included in the study.

Experiment	City	Short description	Timing	Examples of sources
Esplanade Street	Helsinki	Reduced car lanes to create space for pedestrians to increase the vitality of city centre	2023–2024	Evaluation reports and council meeting: https://paatokset.hel.fi/fi/asia/hel-2024-010896?paatos=730d3c96-3aa6-4dda-a591-efcbbb3d1a3f Summary of the winter impacts: https://www.hel.fi/en/news/little-benefit-from-the-esplanade-experimental-area-in-winter Summary of the overall results: http://web.archive.org/web/20250915072729/https://www.hel.fi/en/news/esplanadi-experiment-monitoring-yields-new-results-residents-divided
Lönnrotinkatu bicycle lane	Helsinki	Bicycle lane in parts of Lönnrotinkatu street	2023–2024	Evaluation reports and council meeting: https://paatokset.hel.fi/fi/asia/hel-2024-010896?paatos=730d3c96-3aa6-4dda-a591-efcbbb3d1a3f - "Tiivistelmä keskeisistä tuloksista: Lönnrotinkadun pyöräkaista -kokeilu 2023–2024" - "Lönnrotinkadun pyöräkaistan havainnointi ja haastattelut 2024" Traffic management plan: https://paatokset.hel.fi/fi/asia/hel-2022-011847/3d68660f-72b6-4cd1-b174-1d55d76b1a9d
Low Traffic Neighborhood	Tampere	Testing the low traffic neighborhood concept in Tampere	Autumn 2023	Traffic management plan: https://tampere.cloudnc.fi/fi-Fi/Viranhaltijat/Suunnittelupaumlaumllikkouml_Kaupunkiympaumlristoumln_palvelualue_liikennejau_mlrjestelmauml_n_suunnittelu/Harmalan_rauhallisen_liikenteen_kokeilun(325790) Evaluation report: https://www.traficom.fi/files/media/file/Rauhallisen%20liikenteen%20naapurusto%20-raportti.pdf
City center summer street experiments	Tampere	Temporary closure of streets to create pedestrian friendly streets	2021–2022	<i>Materials have been sent via email.</i>
Middelalderbyen	Copenhagen	Five (?) experiments in the medieval city area before permanent plan	Summer 2021	Project page of PLADS who contributed to the experiment: https://www.plads.org/projekter/middelalderbyen Press release from Copenhagen Municipality: http://web.archive.org/web/20211002204125/https://www.kk.dk/nyheder/nu-starter-forsoegene-med-faerre-biler-i-middelalderbyen Evaluation report: https://www.magasinetkbh.dk/sites/default/files/public/uploads/imce/byrumsforsog-middelalderbyen.pdf Urban space and traffic plan for the Medieval Town for the permanent work: https://www.kk.dk/sites/default/files/agenda/06f89718-7148-438a-925b-9e08d6d68098/66e339e6-6818-46bd-ae5f-6edabc39406e-bilag-1_0.pdf
Nordre Frihavsgade experiment	Copenhagen	Temporary redesign (later more permanent solutions)		Evaluation report: https://www.kk.dk/sites/default/files/agenda/9fc296bd-bdb8-44b3-b797-2a8d047a819d/ce8dcfc9-1639-4682-a816-2e22bb95b5f9-bilag-9.pdf

Turku Kristiinankatu experiment	Turku	Recurring temporary closure of the street during summer	2021–2026	“Turun keskustan kesäkatu tulee vielä ensi kesäksi Kristiinankadulle – tulevien vuosien paikka päätetään syksyllä” https://yle.fi/a/74-20217214 Many evaluation materials are publicly available online and some must be requested from the City.
Kesäkävelykatu (summer walking street)	Pori	Recurring summer experiment, closure of street section from vehicles There is an upcoming plan to create a permanent pedestrian street	2020–, annually	Some news articles: - July 2018: https://yle.fi/a/3-10287394 - March 2019: https://yle.fi/a/3-10711399 Press release in June 2019: https://www.pori.fi/uutinen/yleinen/poriin-avataan-taas-kes%C3%A4k%C3%A4velykatu-2/18/06/2019 Press release, April 2026: https://www.pori.fi/uutinen/etusivun-utiset/osa-kesakavelykadusta-otetaan-kayttoon-ensi-viikolla-huomioi-muutokset-liikennejarjestelyissa/24/04/2026/
Levande Stockholm	Stockholm	Recurring summer streets	2015–	Summary published by City of Helsinki: https://ahjojulkaisu.hel.fi/7DEFFE2C-4A12-CF65-B9A4-83E416400000.pdf Evaluation and overview (2026) made by the consulting company: https://www.spacescape.se/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/Gatupotential_260226-1.pdf
Friisgatan experiment	Malmö	Street experiment that later became a permanent solution	2017–	Summary published by City of Helsinki: https://ahjojulkaisu.hel.fi/7DEFFE2C-4A12-CF65-B9A4-83E416400000.pdf Post that the street will become permanent solution: https://web.archive.org/web/20250503142337/https://malmo.se/Stadsutveckling/Det-har-ar-pa-gang-i-Malmo/Friisgatan.html Press release about the permanent solution and background information about the project: https://www.mynewsdesk.com/se/malmo/pressreleases/uppskattad-sommargata-blir-permanent-gaagata-aaret-runt-3287934 Background information: https://malmocity.se/en/stadskarna-2023/platsen/ and https://malmo.se/Stadsutveckling/Sa-utvecklar-vi-staden/Stadsmiljo/Sommargator--och-torg.html
Sykkelprioritert gate (Bicycle-priority street)	Oslo	Experiments of bicycle-priority streets on Løvenskiolds gate and Vetlandsveien streets	Løvenskiolds built in 2024 and Vetlandsveien in autumn 2025	Evaluation report (2026): https://www.toi.no/getfile.php?mmfileid=80634 Summary in English: https://www.toi.no/getfile.php/1380631-1776930019/Publikasjoner/T%C3%98I%20rapporter/2026/2136-2026/2136-2026_Summary.pdf Webpage at Oslo commune: https://www.oslo.kommune.no/fag-og-utviklingsprosjekter/sykkelprioritert-gate/

Other relevant sources:

- Helsinki experiment guidelines (2022): <https://ahjojulkaisu.hel.fi/6E859F83-14A1-CE67-97E2-83E41A400000.pdf>
- Helsinki experiments operating model (2022): <https://ahjojulkaisu.hel.fi/695D4BC2-C1D5-C770-B89A-83E410500000.pdf>

According to the university policy, I must report the use of AI in the thesis process. ChatGPT has been used to relevant experiments from Swedish and Danish cities. Also, sources for the selected have been partially found due to use of ChatGPT as I am not as familiar with other Nordic cities as Finnish cities. Language of the text was refined by using Microsoft Copilot.