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Special Cycling Edition

Traffic-Free cycle routes

The case against Bicycle helmets & legislation

Bike Film Festivals

Cycling for active transport & recreation in Australia

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Eco-Logica Ltd., 53 Derwent Road, Lancaster, LA1 3ES, U.K Telephone: +44 (0)1524 63175
E-mail: john.whitelegg@phonecoop.coop
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John Whitelegg
Editor
World Transport Policy and Practice

Cycling embodies much of what World Transport Policy and Practice was set up to achieve. Cycling is low cost, pollution free, health giving, greenhouse gas free and supports lively, friendly, sociable communities. Cycling should be at the heart of every government (national and local) policy to achieve climate change objectives, traffic reduction and congestion-busting objectives but it isn't. A great deal of rhetoric and "greenwash" is produced by governments all over the world about the need to encourage cycling but the reality is quite different. Potential cyclists are deterred by the unfriendly and anti-social behaviour of many drivers who show scant consideration for those on bikes and very little enforcement of driver behaviour regulations actually takes place. The problems associated with road traffic danger are compounded by poor quality road maintenance and engineering that frequently gives cyclists very broken and uneven surfaces by the side of the road with an interesting collection of broken glass and litter, manhole covers and drains, to keep them company. Even when there are official bike paths they frequently abandon cyclists at a difficult junction or a roundabout where the cyclist is exposed to peak danger.

In spite of the dramatic and impressive evidence of high rates of cycling in Copenhagen, Odense, Delft, Groningen and the two German cycling demonstration towns (Detmold and Rosenheim) there is very little systematic and integrated application of the lessons. Cycling has a low priority in the minds of government ministers and the consideration of cycling interests is not allowed to get in the way of new road building, new car parks, lenient attitudes to aggressive and anti-social motorists and the subsidy of motorists.

The editor seated on a tricycle.
Photo taken on one of the many traffic-free streets in Oldham in 1957

In spite of this infertile territory there are some success stories. London has seen a dramatic increase in cycling in recent years and a large increase in the cycling budget from the low millions to about £26 million. This is good news and the organisation concerned (Transport for London) should be congratulated. We still do not understand exactly why cycling has gone up in London but the role of activists and citizen movements has been at least as important as official intervention. The congestion charge has helped and there has also been some kind of "terrorist effect". After the July 2005 bombings of the underground and bus system there has been a shift to cycling in an effort (presumably) to avoid the risks associated with the bus and tube.

There is still a huge fiscal disparity in the sum of money spent by local and central government on cycling and other modes. The Mayor of London is now spending about £300 pa per person on public transport in London but less than £5 on cyclists and pedestrians. This is not logical and London is already hitting real capacity problems with its public transport system. It is just not possible to accommodate the forecast level of demand for public transport (population growth and economic development) on the system even if billions are spent. This is where cycling really

delivers. Cycling has the potential to support economically successful cities and prevent over-load on buses, tube and rail. Cycling is a real winner in the portfolio of transport investments.

In the early 1990s the British Medical Association commissioned a report on cycling and health and this was written by Mayer Hillman. It showed that cyclists could expect to live about 2.5 years longer than non-cyclists on the assumption of not very demanding levels of cycling activity. This effect is also associated with better health generally and lower level of demand on health services. Once again cycling delivers billions in health benefits. A sound financial strategy for a national health care system would spend health care cash on cycling.

Cycling has still not delivered its potential to create healthy, liveable and thriving cities. Its role in rural areas is hardly mentioned and discussed and yet it has a strong role to play in supporting rural communities, rural tourism and rural access to schools programmes.

Cycling is the pure embodiment of sustainable transport and sustainable development and its lack of progress after 20 years of rhetoric in the UK and, indeed, its decline for many journeys purposes and in many geographical areas is a national disgrace.

Cycling is now under attack in China giving a further unwelcome dimension to efforts to stimulate consensus and progress on global sustainable development. It is essential that all transport professionals and policy makers generally undertake a clear re-prioritisation of all they do and put walking and cycling at the top of what they should be doing in cities, regions and at the national level. This also means they should be cycling themselves and one of the greatest failures of transport policy and practice globally is that the majority of what goes on in policy making is still influenced by the view, social isolation and lack of understanding that goes with the back seat of a chauffeur driven car in Beijing, London, Washington, New York and all major cities of the world. If you sit on the back seat of a large car in carrying out your daily work you will produce garbage and if you cycle around your own city you will see what needs to be done.

Abstracts

The case against bicycle helmets and legislation

Colin Clarke

Abstract

The issue of bicycle helmets has been under discussion for about 20 years. Many aspects are involved - safety, health, environment, human rights, enforcement and costs. Enforced helmet laws have discouraged cycling and the health benefits of cycling are considered to outweigh the risks. With fewer cyclists due to legislation a key question is whether society benefits from such measures. A series of tests are set for helmets and legislation to see if they provide a benefit.

Key words: Bicycle, helmets, health, legislation

The role of traffic-free routes in encouraging cycling in excluded groups

Craig Moore, Andy Cope and Alex Bulmer

Abstract

The paper presents a detailed analysis of data concerning cyclists on UK traffic-free routes, examined from the perspectives of gender, ethnicity, socio-economic conditions and age. Patterns of use within and between user groups and categories are considered, and compared against national (road-based) data on cycling. The analysis identifies a wide range of disparities between user groups in relation to such issues as trip purpose, cyclist experience, propensity for modal shift, group size, and the location and attributes of routes concerned. The implications of this research are discussed in terms of policy and practical projects. Options for further exploration of the habitual casual factors behind cycling on traffic-free routes, and the implications for policy and planning at the national and regional level are considered.

Keywords: Cycling, Traffic-free routes. National Cycle Network, Gender, Ethnicity, Deprivation, Age

Bike film festivals: Taking a cultural approach to cycling promotion in the UK

Dave Horton, Andy Salkeld

Abstract

Cultural approaches to cycling promotion deserve greater recognition. Such approaches should form an important part of any comprehensive pro-cycling strategy, alongside continuing infrastructural improvements and cycle training. The current rise in popularity of bike film festivals provides an excellent example of the cultural approach. Bike film festivals celebrate cycling as an exciting, diverse and challenging practice that people might actually *want* to do, rather than a cheerless, homogenous and generally dull chore they feel they *ought* to do.

Keywords: cycling, promotion, culture, bike film festivals, morality, pleasure

The case against bicycle helmets and legislation

Colin Clarke

Email: colin@vood.freeserve.co.uk

Is cycling reasonably safe, does it cause environmental pollution, are there health benefits and is legislation of benefit?

Safety comparison

One report on road fatalities (*Road Fatality rates in Australia* 1984 – 85) detailed the risks per million hours of travel. Average values were:- bicyclists 0.41, car drivers 0.42, car passengers 0.5, pedestrians 0.6, motorcyclists 7.5. There are difficulties comparing bicyclists to car users because car drivers are generally trained adults, whereas bicyclists include children and teenagers. Reported emergency admissions for injuries sustained when bicycling at NHS hospitals in England were 0.28% of total admissions (roughly 1 in 357 admissions). Mills reported (Mills 1989) that 66% of cyclist's admissions were detained for just one night and most of the casualties with cranium injuries were admitted for overnight observation. In 2003, the UK had 3,508 road deaths, including 114 cyclists, 693 motorcyclists, 774 pedestrians and approximately 1,900 motor vehicle occupants.

Health benefits

Moderate cycling has many physical and mental benefits (BMA 1992) by reducing the risk of developing heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, colon cancer and depression, and helping to control weight and increase fitness. Dr Hillman from the UK's Policy Studies Institute calculated the life years gained by cycling outweigh life years lost in accidents by a factor of 20 to 1. In 2002, deaths in the UK due to lack of exercise, obesity and heart disease were approximately 187,000 compared to 129 deaths from cycling.

Energy comparison

Comparing the energy (kilojoules) used per person per kilometre shows the bicycle uses the least energy per kilometre of travel. Average values are: bicycle 150, walker 230, motorcyclist 2,100, car - driver only – 5,000. The energy consumed travelling by car, motorcycle and public transport is about 30, 10 and 20 times respectively that used when travelling by bicycle.

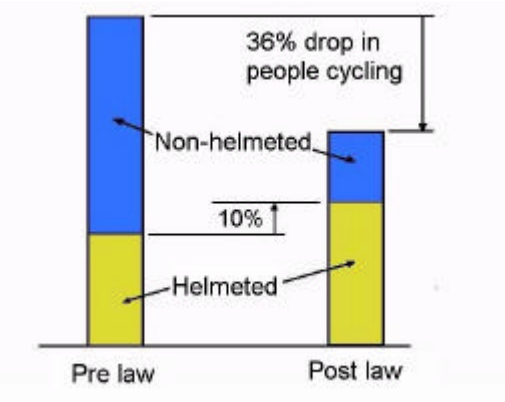
The safety, health and energy benefits of cycling noted above show that it should be promoted. If factors relating to costs and time were considered, then for short distances the benefits of cycling would be even more pronounced. Compared to car driving and motorcycling, cycling poses a much lower risk to other road users. The overall community benefits gained from cycling outweigh the loss of life through cycling accidents and therefore any legislation should ensure that cycling is not discouraged.

Bicycle helmet legislation

Australia led the way in 1990 with bicycle helmet legislation in the state of Victoria. Police enforced the law and the number of people

cycling immediately dropped. A reported 36% drop in number of cyclists (Finch 1993) from 3,121 to 2,011 was from surveys in Melbourne, where 42% wore helmets before the law. The drop of 36% (see Figure 1) represents more than half of those (58%) not wearing helmets.

Figure 1: Helmet law effects



Effectively, 62% of non wearers stopped cycling. Accident data (Cameron 1992) suggest an even larger drop in rural cities and towns, where only 20% wore helmets before the law and a higher proportion of journeys were made by bicycle. Counting the number of cyclists before and after the law was a simple matter but the published results failed to fully disclose the drop in country locations.

The distribution of cyclists by the time of week and percentage on weekdays were: 1990 - 61%, 1991 - 71%, 1992 - 51%. From the total survey counts of 3,121 in 1990, 2,011 in 1991 and 2,478 in 1992 (1992 included a cycle rally passing through a survey site on the weekend, increasing the total).

The number of cyclists counted on weekdays can be calculated to be:

Year	weekday calculated	% drop
1990	1904	
1991	1428	25
1992	1264	34

By the second year the number counted on weekdays was 34% below the pre law count and 9% below the 1991 level. The number of adult and child bicyclists in 1992 was reportedly not much smaller than pre-law numbers and reported teenagers were still down by over 40%. The calculations on weekday numbers indicate the actual drop in numbers of cyclists continued into 1992 and that adult numbers had still not recovered. The law was especially intended for teenagers who had a high accident rate but less than 50% were wearing helmets after the first year. One survey revealed the law resulted in 30 more teenagers wearing helmets compared to 623 fewer cycling. For each extra teenager who wore a helmet, more than 10 others gave up cycling. This result of discouraging people was in sharp contrast to other road safety measures such as seat belts that did not discourage people from driving.

It was estimated 53% of cycling was recreational in 1989 but only 39% in 1991. From the total survey counts of cyclists (3121 in 1990 and 2011 in 1991) recreational cycling dropped by an estimated 57%. For each extra cyclist wearing a helmet, more than 4 others stopped cycling. Legislation was poor policy from the point of view of promoting cycling. Hagel and Pless (2005) suggest that child and adult participation had not declined two years after the law was introduced. This is incorrect and is based on unreliable claims (Robinson 2006).

Prior to the law, the Victorian Government's Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS) did not even consider the effect of reduced cycling. The RIS estimated 3,000 cyclists would be fined per year for not wearing helmets. In fact, over 19,000 fines were issued in the first 12 months (Cameron 1992). A high level of enforcement continues to be necessary some years later.

In other parts of Australia there has been the problem of discouraging people from cycling and fines that takes up valuable police and court time. One survey showed over 90% of high school girls in Sydney had been discouraged from cycling to school (Smith & Milthorpe 1993).

Other countries that have followed with helmet laws have tended to avoid publishing pre to post law annual surveys showing the number cycling, did not conduct surveys, or enforcement may have been low-level. Not conducting surveys tends to cover up any discouraging effects and reduces the opportunity for a fuller analysis of the accident data.

When cyclists were questioned at a cycle rally in the UK, it indicated a resistance to helmet laws by those who did not normally wear one. In 1997 it was reported that school children from near Derby in the UK were asked to wear helmets when cycling to school. This resulted in some of them being expelled after refusing to wear them and other children had given up cycling to school. Forcing employees to wear cycle helmets has led to industrial problems, dismissals, tribunal cases and people changing their duties at work.

Primary test for legislation

Fatality data (Attewell & Dowse 1988) indicates a significant proportion of cyclists sustain serious injuries to other parts of the body than the head. For example, 63% sustained chest injuries and therefore they may not survive even if the head could be completely protected. In some cases injuries to the head are so severe that helmets are unable to prevent death. In other cases a bare headed cyclist may avoid hitting their head, whereas one helmeted could incur an impact due to the increased size of helmet compared to a bare head.

Figure 2: X-ray image

From the calculation of life years gained by cycling outweighing life years lost in accidents by a factor of 20 to 1, we can test if legislation would be of general benefit. The 20 to 1 factor indicates that if 5% of cyclists stopped cycling due to legislation then any benefit would be lost. Fatality data indicates more than 50% of cyclists may die due to other than head injuries. New Zealand data (Sage 1985) detailed that out of 20 bicycle riders fatally injured in Auckland between 1974 and 1984, 16 died (80%) of fatal injury to multiple organ systems. From this a basic test can be set for legislation. If cycling is discouraged by 2.5% or more then it fails to meet the wider objective for the overall health of the nation. With cycling being discouraged by 36% and up to 90% in one case, helmet legislation completely fails the first test. The ratio of 36% to 2.5% is 14.4 to 1 and indicates that in health terms, helmet laws cause far greater harm than good.

Methods of assessing helmets, helmet effects, head injuries and overall safety

A variety of research methods can be used to try to determine helmets effects and any advantages or disadvantages. There are tests

on helmets for impact properties and vision requirements, for example. Most of these types of requirements are covered by various standards... for example, EN 1078. In general, the testing of helmets may not be adequate due to the use of low energy impacts, typically about 50-110J, even though impacts of over 500J may occur in accidents.

Examples of helmet concerns

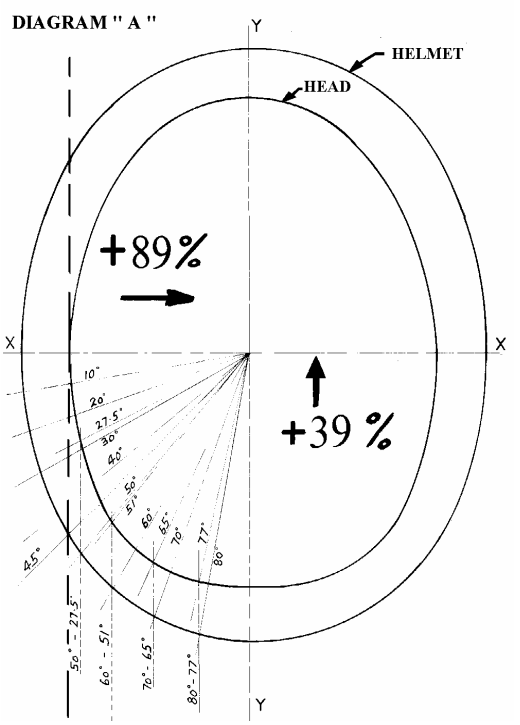
- In tests on helmets by the consumer magazine *Which?,* it was reported that only 9 from 24 passed all tests and therefore even new helmets may not be reliable.

- Southampton University research indicated that helmets can modify the pattern of sound reaching the ears. Any decrease in the ability of cyclists to detect the sound of approaching traffic could be a disadvantage and lead to extra accidents.

- Detailed information taken from measurements of the level of vibration acceleration affecting helmets (Mathieson and Coin 1986). Reported accelerations of 100m/sec^2 occurred, which approximates to a 10g force due to hitting deep pot-holes in the road. The direction of accelerations were fairly random so it is possible that a helmet could exert a force of 10 times its normal weight in random directions to a cyclist's head at a time when maintaining balance may be very difficult in any event. The full- face type of helmets can weigh up to 700 grams.
- Reported testing of the ventilation properties of helmets where a head-form made from porous plaster of Paris was heated and subjected to cooling with fans. It was found a bare head performed the best and helmets varied in their ability to allow cooling to occur.

- A direct comparison of relative impact forces that could occur for a bare head compared to one helmeted in a two dimensional analysis is provided by Clarke (Clarke 2003).

Figure 3: Head and helmet profile



- Average impact forces for the helmeted profile were 85% of the value of the bare head but they incurred 80% more impacts - 9 compared to 5. The report also provides details of helmet use resulting in an increased accident rate.

Case-control studies

These studies try to compare the head injury rate for helmeted to non-helmeted cyclists. The results generally show a lower rate of head injury for helmeted cyclists (Thompson 1989). The formula (Towner 2002) most used to calculate the odds of head injury =

No. of bicyclists who had a head impact and

suffered a head injury ÷ No. of bicyclists who had a head impact and suffered a non-head injury + number of bicyclists who had an accident but not a head impact and suffered a non-head injury

In assessing helmets is it desirable to have a formula that can mainly change in relationship to head injury, and the top half provides for this. With the bottom half it is desirable for it not to change very much and then the proportion of change due to head injuries can be seen. One report detailed interviewing 516 cyclists including 40 wearing helmets (Wasserman 1988). Out of 21 reported falling and hitting their heads, 8 were helmeted and 13 were non-helmeted. If most of the 21 had head and other injuries, the above formula could be applied and may indicate helmeted were safer. If, however, the overall accident rate is calculated, then helmeted would be 20% of their group, 8 from 40, and non-helmeted 2.8 of their group, 13 from 476, indicating non-helmeted had fewer accidents and were probably much safer overall.

Details emerged of an increased risk to cyclists aged under 16 years in New South Wales following legislation when "other injuries" proportionately increased by 68% (Curnow 1998). Thompson's 1989 paper detailed over 20% of cases and controls were wearing helmets at the time of their accident. Compared to the general community wearing rate of about 4%, this may provide one example of how the high protection factor can be calculated due in part to the higher than average accident rate.

In addition, people choosing to wear helmets may take fewer risks compared to teenagers who generally have the lowest wearing rates and also can have high accident rates. Helmet wearers are likely to wear or use other safety aids - lights or highly visible clothing are two examples. Generally the accident rate for cyclists can vary by a factor of 10 to 1 based on distance travelled - for example, children compared to long distance tourists. Voluntary helmet users may also take more care of their helmet and fasten the chin-strap. In practice, case control methodology may not provide a sufficiently sound basis for making reliable claims.

Population based studies

The population based studies tend to examine the overall outcome to cyclists' safety and head injuries from appreciable changes in the helmet wearing rate, generally following legislation. Head injuries fell appreciably for motorcyclists, pedestrians and cyclists in South Australia following road safety measures at about the same time bicycle helmet legislation was introduced. It can be quite difficult to determine if lower rates of head injury were mainly due to helmet use or due to changes in behaviour on the road. Robinson recently provided data showing the percentage of head injuries had not changed appreciably compared to other road users following increased helmet usage (Robinson 2006). Research (Janssen & Wiseman 1985) shows the effects of lateral impacting by vehicles on pedestrians and cyclist dummies at speeds of 40 and 30km/hr. From a small change in driving speed a large change in the head injury criteria (HIC) values can occur.

Comparing studies

The methodology of case-control studies may give the impression of a benefit from helmet use even if no benefit occurred. The population based studies provide an indication if overall actual safety has improved and indicates if helmets are beneficial in reducing overall head injuries. They may also reflect changes in general road safety. The fatality data (Robinson 1996) indicated about 80% of known cases were wearing helmets compared to a general

wearing rate of about 80%, and suggest helmets do not lower the fatality rate. Recently the evidence claiming helmets provide protection from brain injury has been questioned (Curnow 2005) because the studies examined did not take account of scientific knowledge of types and mechanisms of brain injury.

The following 2 examples show the evidence for helmet promotion is in serious doubt. From the web site www.cyclehelmets.org we read:

"The proportions of head injuries did not change over the period despite helmet use in the USA increasing from 18% of cyclists in 1991 to 50% in 2000. However, cycle use during the period fell by 21%. Thus those who continued to cycle were 40% more likely to suffer head injury by 2001 than in 1991."

The ECF (European Cycling Federation 1998) stated "the evidence from Australia and New Zealand suggests that the wearing of helmets might even make cycling more dangerous", indicating safety was actually reduced.

Australia road fatalities - 6 year comparison

Period 1984 - 1989 compared to 1992 – 1997.

Their helmet laws were introduced between 1990 and 1992.

Fatalities	Peds	Mcyc	Bicyclist	MVO	Total
1984 - 1889	3158	2180	515	11217	17111
1992 - 1997	2125	1164	282	8008	11610
% reduction	33	47	45 (**22**)	29	32

Cycling was discouraged by approximately 30% due to the helmet law. Allowing for the reduction in cycling gives only a 22% reduction for cyclists, the smallest reduction of all road users.

Analysis of accident data shows increased risks in proportion to numbers of cyclists counted - for example, up 68% for children in NSW and up 16% for children in Victoria. Other data relating to adults in Melbourne and cyclists in Western Australia also shows higher accident involvement levels in relationship to the number of cyclists riding.

New Zealand - fatalities - 6 year comparison

Period 1988 - 1993 compared to 1995 – 2000. The NZ helmet law was introduced in 1994.

Fatalities	Peds	Mcyc	Bicyclist	MVO	Total
1988-1993	506	645	123	2824	4106
1995-2000	357	309	83	2354	3098
% reduction	30	52	33 (**14**)	17	25

The number of people cycling in NZ declined after their helmet law enforcement by approximately 22% between 1993 and 1997. Allowing for a 22% decline in cycling gives only a 14% reduction for cyclists, the smallest reduction of all road users.

For the period 1977-81, West Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden all had more than a 20% reduction in road fatalities, averaging 23.8% for non-cyclists compared with a 24.2% reduction for cyclists. The indications are that when general road safety improves by more than 20%, cyclists also show a similar benefit.

Secondary test for helmets

A second test can be used for helmets.

"Are the promotions and claims made for helmets based on reliable scientific methods that take account of all possible disadvantages as well as potential benefits".

Helmets promotion fails the second test because:

- Potential disadvantages have not been fully investigated
- Data from some population based studies shows safety has been reduced compared to other road users
- The overall scientific approach to consider the aspects of head and brain injury, including rotational accelerations and how helmets may affect these, has not received sufficient evaluation
- Most of the claims for helmets come from case controlled studies that have potentially substantial weaknesses in their methodologies
- Overall, the evidence for helmet use is not conclusive.

Civil liberties consideration

The Bible provides an early example of allowing for personal choice with David choosing not to wear either a helmet or armour when fighting Goliath. In that case Goliath's helmet failed to protect. Today motorcycle helmets and car seatbelt legislation overrides the civil liberty of personal choice and many people may assume the same could apply to bicycle helmets. In practice, the issues involved are very different. Civil liberties aspects are only considered to a limited extent when helmet legislation is introduced. In Australia, approximately 30% were wearing helmets before the law, meaning the legislation was trying to force 70% of people into wearing them. They considered the "loss of freedom of choice" to be an important cost but regarded it to be of a philosophical nature and one that could not be costed. There are health, safety, environmental, legal, police and court issues involved that may be costed. Article 1 of the Human Right Declaration refers to people being endowed with reason, and if they reason that they should have the right of choice and do not want to wear a helmet, should this choice be respected?

Cases in Australia have resulted in people being imprisoned for non-payment of fines. Tens of thousands of fines are issued annually for not wearing a helmet. Enforcement aspects are likely to sour the relationship between police and young people. Court cases may entail significant social and monetary costs.

In general, the public is only made aware of the potential benefits of wearing helmets and subjected to helmet claims and sales material. They are not provided with details of helmets being associated with an increased accident rate, are not often told about children being

strangled due to wearing helmets, and are not given a full account of any disadvantages of helmets in general.

Safety for cyclists relates strongly to the number of people cycling and the expectation of motorists encountering cyclists (Jacobson 2003).

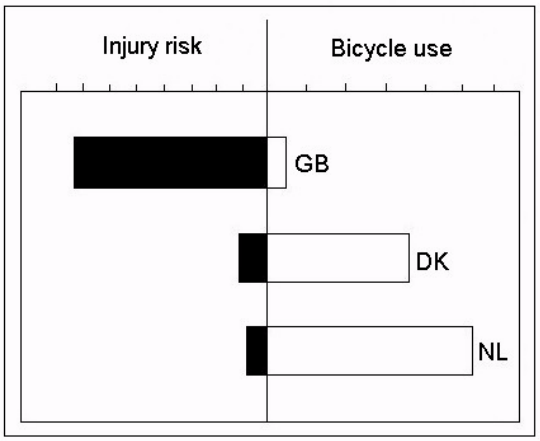


Figure 4: More cycling - less risk

Prior to introducing legislation in Australia, cycling was reported to be growing by as much as 10% per year in some areas. After legislation, surveys showed a 36% drop in the numbers riding. This effectively reduces safety for the majority of those still cycling. If cycling had continued to grow at only 5% per year over the past 15 years, today the numbers riding may have doubled.

In Victoria, approximately 2.2 million people cycled pre law, 1,438,000 in Melbourne. The 36% drop equates to a reduction of 517,000 people. Outside the Melbourne area, 778,000 cycled pre law and the percentage drop could have been higher. With thousands being discouraged by legislation and the benefits of cycling outweighing the risks reportedly by up to 20 to 1, the health implications are very disturbing.

The issue of "freedom of choice" is important to ensure individual beliefs are fully respected. Older people may suffer arthritic hands and fingers and having to buckle up a helmet can make cycling less convenient for them. For short trips to destinations such as shops, having to locate a helmet, fit and buckle up, possibly lock it to the bike while shopping, re-fit and remove it is considered inconvenient by many, particularly if handling other items of shopping with a few stops involved. Women and girls may not find it appealing to have their hair flattened by a helmet after spending time and money in its preparation.

Such issues demonstrate that the civil liberty considerations are much stronger for bicycle helmets than for seat belts or motorcycle helmets. In addition, the basic safety question about helmet use is an issue in dispute, with a reported 31 papers in favour of helmet wearing or legislation, compared with 32 against (Towner 2002). Helmet use is only intended to protect the user while other road safety measures such as speed and drink drive limits are enforced to protect both the user and the general public. The case for removing freedom of choice may be stronger when the intention is to protect other people rather than just the user.

Third test for helmets

A third test can be set for helmets.

"Is the case for helmet legislation and removal of 'freedom of choice' sufficiently strong to warrant its introduction?"

Helmets fail the third test because:

- People are more likely to cycle without helmet requirements
- The potential health loss due to legislation

and discouragement of cycling is much larger than the potential gains

- The safety merit of helmets is in serious dispute
- Evidence shows helmet use increases the accident rate
- Helmet legislation removes the individual respect people have in making a personal choice
- The risk of serious head injury when cycling is not unduly high
- People not wishing to wear a helmet are pressured to act in a way which is contrary to their convictions.

Discussion

The case for wearing a helmet is not strong and enforced wearing may in practice reduce overall safety. Testing of helmets to meet various standards only partially ensures they meet the standards and testing may have little bearing on the overall safety effects of wearing helmets. In the 3 tests detailed, helmets needed to pass all 3, but instead completely failed all 3.

A fourth question could be asked of helmets.

"Can they be recommended as a safety product with all the uncertain aspects their use entails".

Several members of the UK Parliament signed Early Day Motion 764, 3 March 04, noting the substantial disparity between claims made for the efficacy of pedal cycle helmets and their measured effect in real populations. Some MPs may be aware of the substantial disparity but the general pubic may not be sufficiently informed and would probably not be made aware of any possible disadvantages from wearing a helmet. The UK's national cycling body, the CTC, voted for the removal of the questionable advice to wear a helmet in the Highway Code at their AGM in 1996 after hearing evidence and debate. Should the UK Parliament act to safeguard the compensation aspects for cyclists who are not wearing a helmet and suffer head injuries due to motorists being at fault?

Legislation results in millions of non-wearers purchasing helmets, imposition of fines on thousands of people, many hours of police/court /legal aid resources, but also an increase in the accident rate and a reduction in overall safety. A number of useful web sites provide guidance - www.cyclehelmets.org, www.cyclehelmets.com and www.magma.ca/~ocbc).

One important question to consider is how best to promote cycling and how helmets may affect people's view of cycling. Figure 2 and many images associated with helmet promotion relate to danger, focusing public attention on accidents, head injuries and fatalities instead of enjoyment, health, energy savings, environment, time and cost savings that cycling can bring. After fully considering the issues involved, one report did not recommend either mandatory helmet wearing or helmet promotion (Hillman 1993). Figure 4 shows the result from widespread use of the bicycle with good results for both safety and levels of use in a country with low helmet usage (see www.ctcyorkshirehumber.org.uk under Campaigns for a selection of photos from the Netherlands).

Summary

1) Legislation should not be introduced because the safety case for helmets is not conclusive, with several reports detailing concerns.

2) Legislation may influence the courts and tend to reduce compensation for non-helmeted cyclists compared to helmeted ones, pedestrians or indeed motor vehicle occupants who sustain head injuries.

3) Legislation should warn people that in many collisions involving motor vehicles, a cycle helmet might not provide enough protection to prevent a fatality.

4) The effects of helmet wearing on balancing, head temperature and head rotational acceleration on impact needs more research.

5) All available evidence on enforced helmet laws indicates cycling is discouraged due to legislation and the health lost due to lack of exercise exceeds the predicted benefits from helmet use.

6) A helmet warning is warranted because several children have been killed due to strangulation by their helmet being caught on something when the child has been playing. The US Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) recommends parents ensure that when children get off their bikes, they remove their helmets.

7) Non-helmeted cyclists avoid the possible increased risks of accidents, head impacts, wind noise and neck injury and also may benefit through greater convenience and enjoyment.

Recommendations

- To establish a comprehensive program of research into how helmet effects relate to the rate of accident involvement, impacting a helmeted head compared to a bare head, rotational aspects and any effects re riding stability, balance and control.
- Countries and states with bicycle helmet legislation suspend enforcement activity until more research is conducted.
- Target road safety measures to reduce accidents and head injuries by covert measures to control speed of traffic and decrease the incidence of speeding across all speed zones, in addition to accident black spots and taking care not to install traffic squeezing infrastructure.

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Colin Clarke studied mechanical engineering at Huddersfield Polytechnic, qualified in 1970 as a British Cycling Federation coach, has cycled for more than 40 years and has worked as a road safety instructor teaching children how to ride bicycles safely.

Cycling and the City

Dave Horton

Centre for Mobilities Research, Lancaster University
Email: d.r.horton@lancaster.ac.uk

If we are serious about encouraging cycling, and specifically about getting more urban trips made by bike, what other general position is it possible to adopt? How else can we transform our cities into beacons of sustainability and conviviality? Cyclists must be given universal access to the city. As advocates of cycling, we should work according to this vision: CYCLISTS WELCOME, anywhere and everywhere!

Should cyclists be able to cycle anywhere in the city?
YES, OF COURSE

What do we want our cities to be like? We must imagine the city we want, and then work to bring it about. My vision of the city is of a place full of people, full of congenial places for those people to meet and mingle, and full of cyclists. It is a vision of a place where people routinely use bikes as their ordinary means of mobility, and of a place transformed by this cycling. A vision of a place with far fewer cars travelling much more slowly than at present, along tree-lined streets bustling with all kinds of people: walkers, children and adults at play, cyclists, café dwellers and chatting neighbours. A vision of green, sustainable conviviality.

Clichéd? Very! Idealistic? No. We must have progressive visions to guide and animate our work, to make our work life affirming and joyful. Cycling promotion requires not technocrats but visionaries. And, of course, the city is constantly changing. Try though people do, its continuous and contingent unfolding cannot be stopped. So when thinking about cycling in the city, we must not be trapped by the present, by what is done NOW, by what is acceptable NOW. We must instead be guided by our visions of cycling futures. Cities in the future can and will be governed by currently unknowable styles of movement. We will develop new ways of being in the city, and cycling in the future will look different from cycling today. That's fantastic - for the sake of sustainability, we need it to be the case.

So we should not strive to insert cycling more efficiently and attractively into currently existing urban configurations. Let us not take the city as a static thing to which cycling must conform. Let us instead put cycling to work, using it to build our dynamic, progressive, sustainable urban visions. Let us consider how cycling can change, and be used to change, our existing and imperfect urban environment.

Cyclists welcome, everywhere. Absolutely.

But what about the desires of non-cyclists? What about potential conflicts with other groups? Many people would like to exclude

cyclists from pavements and city centres. Come to that, many would like to exclude cyclists from the roads, especially now that - lucky things - we're so often getting an infrastructure of our own! Oughtn't we good-naturedly to acquiesce to the desires of non-cyclists? Absolutely not! Go back to our vision. Return to reflection on the kind of city we want. "Exclude" cycling? The most sustainable means of getting to the city? Because of the anyway unattainable desire for pedestrian-only (for which read 'car-dependent') space?" You must be joking! The sustainable city must warmly embrace the bike, and instead get much better at excluding the car.

Let us question the desire for pure space. Motorists' desire for pure space leads to the removal of cyclists from the road. Pedestrians' desire for pure space leads to the demonisation of pavement cycling. Quantitatively small, politically weak, cyclists lose out. So instead let us work towards a city so diverse and so tolerant that the call for pure space is rendered nonsensical. Cyclists Welcome! Something can only be out of place if it has its place. If the place of cycling is everywhere, it can never be out of place. This will create conflict. Although different uses and meanings of the same space result in the development of social skills, rules and rituals to minimise conflict, co-existence of different uses inevitably sometimes provokes conflict. That's OK. Conflict is an intrinsic part of urban life. Handled maturely, conflict reproduces a diverse and tolerant society. Conversely, the demand for pure space, such as space free from cycling, inevitably produces not just conflict but intolerance, discrimination and authoritarian means of control, policing and surveillance.

We must spatialise our ideology. What on earth does that mean?! It means that if our ideological vision is to centre cycling, to privilege cycling as an urban mode of mobility, then we must strive to centre cycling in spatial terms. That means welcoming cyclists onto the centres of our roads and into the hearts of our cities.

Roads first. Across most of the world, cars dominate the city. Even where cyclists are legally entitled to share space with cars, most people today fear to cycle. Legally and theoretically, cyclists can ride the city's roads. But culturally and practically they cannot. The state of these roads is killing cycling. Any city serious about promoting cycling must reclaim these spaces from their domination by the car, and city authorities currently driving cyclists off their streets for the sake of mass automobility should think again. If we want to promote cycling in our cities we must give cyclists pride of place on our roads. We must construct urban environments which enable cyclists to parade proudly, rather than continue to produce cyclists whose dominant subjectivity is either apologetic for its very presence on the roads or

enraged by its mistreatment upon them. So on urban roads cycling should take space from motorised traffic - MUCH MORE space in a city really serious about promoting cycling. By transforming one lane into a green corridor shared by cyclists and cycle-friendly buses, even urban stretches of motorway can be rendered cycle friendly. Of course traffic speeds ought simultaneously and radically to be lowered. A maximum urban speed limit of 30 kilometres per hour would make cycling both safer and relatively faster. Thanks to pioneers across the globe, we have a growing range of practical knowledge about how to attempt all these kinds of things.

What about the heart of the city? Of course city centres ought to be dominated by people - people chatting, working, watching, drinking, eating, entertaining, being entertained, shopping. City centres are vital social spaces. In order to contribute to them cyclists should have unimpeded access. We must not let occasional hysteria to the contrary bruise our confidence that sensible riding of the bicycle through densely populated urban space is, and will continue to be, the norm. So the cyclist wanting to meet friends at a café ought to be able to ride directly to that café. More significantly, city centres are important through routes, often enabling cyclists to move across the city in the most direct and safest way. Wherever possible, facilitation of cycling movements across the city should come through reallocation of road and parking space away from the car. But there is nothing wrong with cyclists sharing urban space with pedestrians. Indeed, active celebration of such a sharing is a prerequisite for genuine urban sustainability.

Why? Because cycling's battle is not with walking and must not become so. Walking and cycling together oppose the car in the current struggle for sustainable cities. Walking and cycling are partners in the politics of sustainability, with a renewed urban conviviality at its core. For the sake of sustainability, this conviviality must involve not just mutual recognition and tolerance, but mutual celebration of walking and cycling. A convivial urban sustainability demands respect for the bicycle at the heart of the city. It demands signs, whether literally or metaphorically, across the city proclaiming 'Cyclists Welcome!'. This urban vision should stretch to small children, the cyclists of tomorrow, learning to ride bikes among pedestrians in the city's heart. It should include BMX riders and busking unicyclists entertaining the urban crowds, bringing pleasure to bicycling Bobbies resting on their beats.

Of course many cyclists entering the city centre can be encouraged - through ample provision of high quality, covered and secure facilities - to park and walk. Wherever we want to effect this switch between cycling and walking, we must provide affordances to it. But pedestrians should and undoubtedly could be happy sharing space with cyclists. Cyclists riding through the city at night will re-civilise parts of the city the car cannot reach, places where many people currently fear to tread. Wherever cyclists go, as their numbers grow, those places will become more effectively policed, rendered increasingly safe for all. The sociable city will be stretched from walking to cycling distance.

What about pavements? The desire to cycle on pavements will fall as road conditions improve. But some people, some of the time, will still want to use pavements, and should not be stigmatised, penalised or criminalised for doing so. It is only the currently dominant association of cycling with deviance that enables pavement riding to be constructed as inherently problematic. Recognition that cyclists adjust their behaviour according to circumstances, and

can be trusted to be considerate, will naturally emerge as cycling becomes more widespread, normal and respected.

Where else, finally, besides all roads, pavements and city centres ought cyclists be allowed to cycle? All cities have ideal cycling corridors; rivers, canals, coastal paths and promenades, disused rail lines. If they're not already, these can and should be used as cycling routes. Their use should be about providing additional, not alternative, cycling routes. About making cycling more accessible, attractive and advantageous. Only when such routes contribute to, and form just one component of, a radically expanded cycle-friendly infrastructure can we say they are genuinely pro-cycling, involved in the push to promote cycling, rather than merely shifting cycling's current geographies. Elsewhere, folding bikes should be allowed on all urban trains and buses. All modal interchanges should have bikes for hire. Over the long term such policies will encourage a car-lite city, with buses, trains and trams combining with walking and cycling to provide access for all to everywhere.

Overall, we must stop participating in the consignment of our privileged practice to the margins; we must mainstream cycling. The bicycle is an essential tool for sustainable urban revitalisation. Cycling can and must be embraced, people enjoying its pivotal role in the development of their city as a green and convivial place.

To conclude, what consequences flow from this position? To the extent that we work towards cyclists being able to go anywhere in the city, we can relax some current preoccupations. Concentrating on making roads better for cycling and less attractive to motorised traffic, and on rendering city centres accessible to bikes, should reduce - though not extinguish - the urge towards a 'separate', off-road cycling infrastructure. Making the city cycle friendly entails the transformation of all urban infrastructures - canals, roads, rivers, railways, pavements and pedestrianised zones - into cycling spaces desirable and accessible to many people currently uncommitted to cycling.

New cycling subjectivities and new ways of governing the cyclist will be needed. The cyclist moving between different kinds of cycling spaces needs constantly to be altering their cycling behaviour. Cycling in the future will be a complex practice, requiring shifts between different kinds of cycling environment, each requiring different kinds of interaction, speed, attitude and bodily disposition. One moment sitting up and slowing down to avoid intimidating people strolling at their leisure or wayward dogs, the next needing to assert oneself in order to negotiate stalled (or still perhaps occasionally speeding) motorised traffic. There will of course be a need for codes of conduct, regulations, affordances to and enforcement of appropriate behaviours. But our principal and principled task should be to render the city universally accessible to cycling. Although important and - in practice - necessarily connected, governing the cyclist in urban space should always be a secondary consideration.

So cycling should be welcome across the city. Giving cyclists the freedom of a city would constitute a major step towards its sustainability and conviviality.

This paper formed my formal contribution to the debate, 'Should cyclists be able to cycle anywhere in the city?' at Velo-City, in Dublin, May-June 2005

The role of traffic-free routes in encouraging cycling among excluded groups:

A case study of the national cycle network

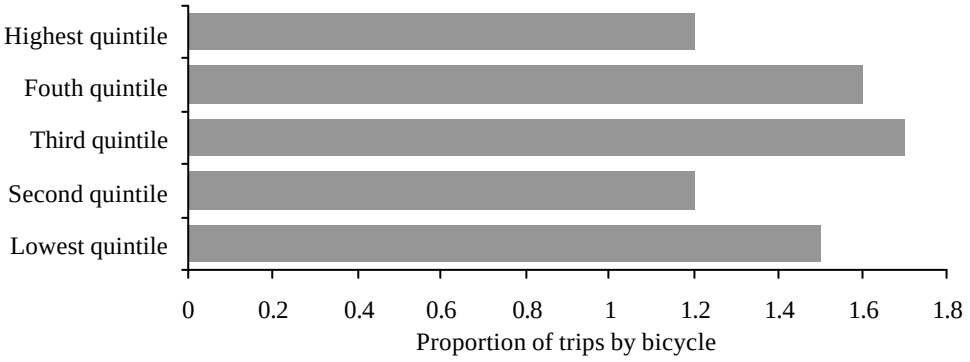
Craig Moore, Andy Cope and Alex Bulmer

Email: andyc@sustrans.org.uk

Cycling in the UK: a context based on national level data

The benefits of cycling as a mode of transport are increasingly widely recognised within the public domain. The bicycle has low access costs, high efficiency in relation to road space and congestion, numerous personal and public health benefits, and is a low impact means of transportation (Department of Transport 1996). Despite these benefits, cycling within the UK constitutes a relatively small proportion of the transport spectrum. Overall, the level of bicycle use in the UK has fallen steadily since the mid 1970s. Department for Transport (DfT) figures show that the number of trips made by bicycle per person per year has decreased from 30 trips in the mid 1950s to 15 trips in 2004 (DfT 2005). Despite the long-term decline in cycling levels, the data generated by the DfT fails to pinpoint any clear trends in recent years. UK bicycle ownership and usage levels have been influenced by a shift in the structure of the economy; a direct result of the dispersal of employment sites and changes in the regularity of working arrangements (Dobbs 2004). Analysis at the ward level demonstrates that it is residents within less deprived wards who have the highest level of access to bicycles, compared to residents of wards with greater levels of deprivation (Gaffron 2003). National figures show that people in the third and fourth income quintiles make the greatest proportion of trips by bike. The lowest income quintile has the third highest proportion of trips by bicycle (figure 1).

Figure 1: Cycle trips by income quintile (DfT, 2002)



National statistics also highlight the gender disparities in cycle use. Males make twice as many trips per annum as females (20 compared to 10), and travel over three times the annual cycle mileage of females (DfT, 2004a). There are also considerable differences between levels of cycling undertaken by different age groups. The 30-39 years and 40-49 years age categories cycle most frequently, but within age groups there are major gender differences (figure 2), perhaps most notably in the 17-20 years age category.

Figure 2: Number of trips by bicycle among each age category by gender (adapted from DfT, 2005)

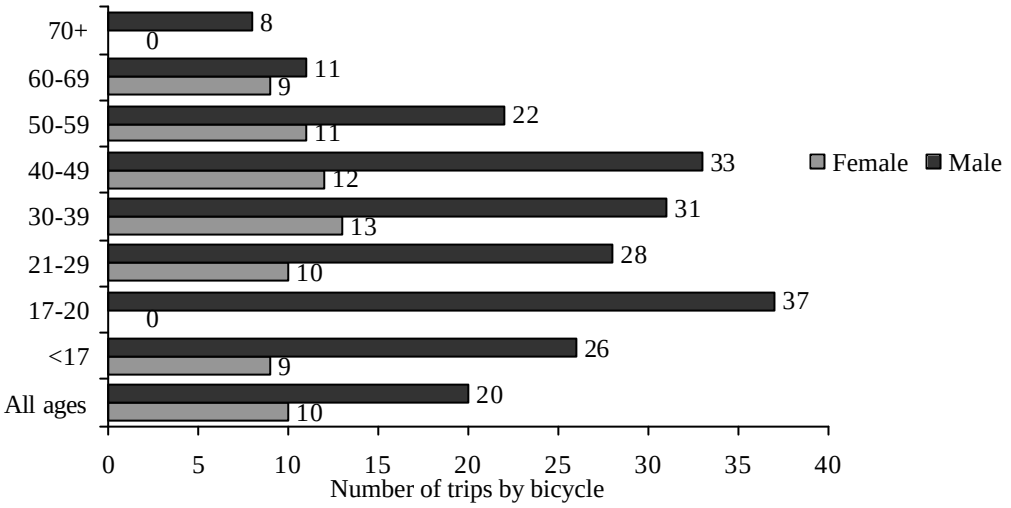
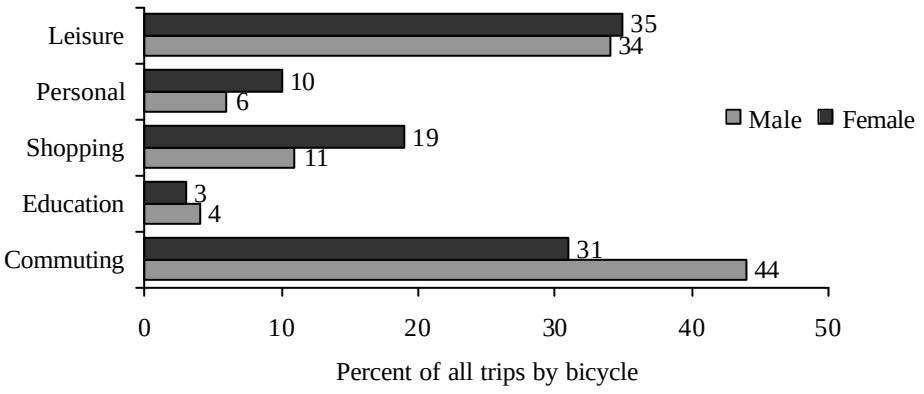


Figure 3 outlines trip type profiling for men and women. Males dominate commuter trips. Females are more likely to cycle for personal or shopping purposes. The proportion of leisure trips is similar for both males and females.

Figure 3: Purpose of journeys by gender (DfT, 2002)



A range of government and non-government initiatives target an increase in the proportion of trips made by bicycle. Among these is the National Cycle Network (NCN), identified by the DfT as "*the strongest success story in walking and cycling*" (2004b). The NCN is a core technical project of Sustrans, a voluntary sector sustainable transport organisation. The NCN is

unprecedented in terms of scale (10,000 miles UK wide), means of delivery (public and voluntary sector partnerships), and impact on a range of policy areas (transport, health, land use, community, environment, economy, etc). The NCN is a composite of designated stretches of minor roads and traffic-free routes connecting major cities and towns across the UK. The ratio of on-road sections to sections on traffic-free routes is approximately 2:1.

The reported success of the NCN in increasing cycle use (Sustrans, 2004; Sustrans, 2005; DfT 2004b) is not reflected in Government data. The lack of Government data from traffic-free routes, the routes with strongest usage growth on the NCN, is considered to be the root cause of this problem. Not only is there a failure to address cycling on traffic-free routes in terms of volume of use, but also to consider the particular nature of use on the traffic-free network. This study investigates cycling on traffic-free routes from the perspectives of gender, ethnicity, socio-economic deprivation and age, highlighting areas where policy actions can be developed, and pinpointing the targets for further research.

Analysis of National Cycle Network user data: social, economic and cultural perspectives

The monitoring programme for the NCN consists of intercept surveys conducted at sites across the UK. A range of issues are covered in the survey, including trip type, modal selection, origin and destination, and respondent profiling data. Cyclists, pedestrians and other legitimate route users are included. The data used in this paper is from cyclists on traffic-free routes only between 2000 and 2004, and consists of over 9,000 responses from 150 sites.

The following tables represent an expression of the data that is designed to highlight the differences in distribution among different user groups or categorisations. The frequency in each group and category is converted to a proportion by group. The proportion distribution among the observed population is also calculated by row. The value shown in the table is an expression of the difference between the proportions observed in each category against the proportion among the sampled population. A value of 100 represents categorical distribution that is the same as the distribution across the population. A low value reflects a smaller proportion than is found in the population, and a large value reflects a greater proportion than is found in the population. The greater the deviation from 100, the greater the disparity of the distribution in any given category, compared with the observed distribution across the sample. In all cases the expression is calculated by row.

Where n values shown do not match the whole sample size, this is due to the non-allocation of responses to the relevant categories. This is due to the changes in classification categories over time, or changes in the questionnaire limiting the capacity for comparison. Where deprivation levels are referred to, these are based on approximate trisection of sample sites into three categories based on the Governments' Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) figures; health deprivation is based on Index of Health Deprivation (IHD) values (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister 2004).

Gender

The ratio of male to female cyclists on the NCN is approximately 3:1. Table 1 illustrates that when disaggregated by age, there are greater

concentrations of female cyclists in the 24-34 years and 35-44 years categories than are observed in these categories in the whole sample. This is countered by an under-representation, based on observed population distributions, in other age categories, particularly over 60 years.

Table 1: Relative distribution of cyclists among age categories split by gender

Gender	**Age category**				
	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-59	60+
Male	102	98	96	101	107
Female	95	107	111	98	78

n = 9122

Table 2 shows that females are more likely to be observed on routes with higher overall levels of usage than is typical of the distribution of use across the surveyed population. This pattern is reversed for males.

Table 2: Relative distribution of cyclists on routes with varying usage densities split by gender

Gender	**Density of usage of route**		
	Low usage	Interme diate usage	High usage
Male	108	100	97
Female	77	101	111

n = 9341

A greater than typical incidence of females than males cycling in groups is apparent from the data, and a correspondingly lower incidence of females cycling alone (table 3).

Table 3: Relative distribution of cyclists among groups of different size split by gender

Gender	**Cyclist group size**		
	1	2-5	6 and above
Male	106	88	83
Female	82	135	151

n = 8688

A modest degree of imbalance in the relative incidence of male and female cyclists in areas of low and mid-range deprivation is apparent from table 4. However, the difference is much more pronounced in areas of high deprivation where female cyclists are under-represented. There is

a high degree of correlation between the IMD values and the IHD values, and therefore the same pattern of distribution can be observed in the classifications of areas, namely fewer female cyclists than should be expected, based on distributions across the surveyed population of cyclists, in areas with poorer health conditions (table 5).

Table 4: Relative distribution of cyclists on routes with varying IMD values split by gender

Gender	**Multiple deprivation index class of route**		
	Low deprivation	Mid-range deprivation	High deprivation
Male	97	102	113
Female	108	96	64

n = 7461

Table 5: Relative distribution of cyclists on routes with varying IHD values split by gender

Gender	**Health deprivation index of site**		
	Poor health	Mid-range health	Good health
Male	109	102	97
Female	74	94	108

n = 7461

Respondents are also asked whether the presence of the route has helped them to increase their levels of regular of physical activity. The difference between male and female respondents was not statistically significant. Neither was there any difference between the distribution of male and female users on routes in urban and rural areas, or in the distribution of male and female respondents on traffic-free and road adjacent routes. Table 6 describes respondents' self-reported cycling status. The data highlights the lower cycling experience levels of female cyclists relative to male cyclists, although differences in reporting perceptions and confidence levels are not taken into account.

Table 6: Relative distribution of cyclists among self-reported cycling experience groups split by gender

Gender	**Cycling status**				
	New	Starting again	Occasional	Experienced occasional	Experienced regular
Male	76	90	85	97	106
Female	176	132	147	109	82

n = 7360

When trip type is considered, modest differences between males and females emerge. A higher proportion of female cyclists were recorded making trips for education (including escort to education) and shopping purposes than the equivalent among male cyclists. A greater proportion of male cyclists than female cyclists were making trips for leisure purposes. The data is presented in table 7.

Table 7: Relative distribution of cyclists by trip type categories split by gender

Gender	**Trip purpose**				
	Leisure	Personal business	Shopping	Education	Commuting
Male	101	99	88	86	100
Female	97	102	136	143	99

n = 2718

Ethnicity

Almost 98% of cyclists on the NCN were white, with the largest group from a black or minority ethnic community (BME) being Asian/Asian British (0.8%). Relative distributions suggest that females are disproportionately heavily represented among mixed and Chinese/other groups. Table 8 shows the particular under representation of females from BME groups among cyclists in Asian/Asian British and Black/Black British groups.

Table 8: Relative distribution of cyclists among ethnic groups split by gender

Gender	**Ethnic group**				
	White	Mixed	Asian/Asian British	Black/Black British	Chinese/Other
Male	100	91	126	122	97
Female	101	129	20	32	109

n = 7451

Differences in the age category distribution between ethnic groups are particularly pronounced (table 9). BME group cyclists are most likely to be found in the younger age categories, and there is notable under-representation of cyclists from BME groups in older age categories.

Table 9: Relative distribution of cyclists among age categories split by ethnic group

Ethnic group	**Age category**				
	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-59	60+
White	96	99	100	101	102
BME	276	163	86	54	34

n = 7665

The distribution of cyclists from BME communities on routes of varying usage levels shows a mixed picture, with higher proportions than typical of the surveyed population on higher use routes, but lower proportions on low and mid-range use routes (table 10).

Table 1: Relative distribution of cyclists on routes with varying usage densities split by ethnic group

Ethnic group	**Density of usage of route**		
	Low usage	Intermediate usage	High usage
White	101	100	99
BME	45	92	137

n = 7838

BME cyclists were also more likely to found cycling alone rather than in groups of between two and five individuals, compared to white respondents (see table 11). However, there was a greater than expected incidence of BME group respondents in larger groups of cyclists.

Table 11: Relative distribution of cyclists among groups of different size split by ethnic group

Ethnic group	**Cycle group size**		
	1	2-5	6 and above
White	100	101	98
BME	114	69	179

n = 7193

A higher proportion of BME respondents were intercepted at sites located in high and mid-range deprivation areas, with a corresponding under-representation in low deprivation wards (table 12). ONS census data shows that a high proportion of BME communities are located within more deprived wards (ONS, 2003).

Table 12: Relative distribution of cyclists on routes with varying IMD values split by ethnic group

Ethnic group	**Deprivation index of site**		
	Low deprivation	Mid-range deprivation	High deprivation
White	101	100	98
BME	77	116	168

n = 6295

The same distribution pattern, although to a lesser degree, can be observed in table 13, which shows variation according to IHD based categorisation.

Table 13: Relative distribution of cyclists on routes with varying IHD values split by ethnic group

Ethnic group	**Health index of site**		
	Poor health	Mid-range health	Good health
White	99	100	100
BME	129	84	94

n = 6295

Analysis shows that a higher proportion of BME respondents were found in urban areas, compared with distribution across the whole sample (table 14).

Table 14: Relative distribution of cyclists on routes in urban and rural areas split by ethnic group

Ethnic group	**Location**	
	Urban	Rural
White	99	101
BME	124	52

n = 7838

Concerning cycling status, the distribution pattern suggests that a similar proportion of white and BME group cyclists are new to cycling, and that BME groups carry a greater proportion of people starting to cycle again and occasional cyclists than is typical (table 15). The proportion of BME group cyclists who say they are experienced, regular cyclists is lower than the proportion observed in the surveyed population.

Table 15: Relative distribution of cyclists among self-reported cycling experience groups split by ethnic group

Ethnic group	Cycling status				
	New	Starting again	Occasional	Experienced occasional	Experienced regular
White	100	100	100	100	100
BME	100	108	110	103	96

n = 7507

Regarding trip purpose, table 16 shows differences with reference to ethnicity. A lower incidence than is typical among the surveyed population is reported for leisure trips among BME respondents, and higher than typical proportions are reported for shopping and commuting trips. No trips for personal business or education purposes were reported by respondents from BME groups.

Table 16: Relative distribution of cyclists by trip type categories split by ethnic group

Ethnic group	Trip purpose				
	Leisure	Personal business	Shopping	Education	Commuting
White	100	102	99	102	100
BME	98	0	121	0	113

n = 2543

Deprivation

Analysis of deprivation is conducted via the trisection of survey point data into approximately evenly sized groups for high, mid-range and low levels of deprivation, based on the IMD value of the area through which the route passes. Table 17 shows a mixed picture of distribution. Respondents on low usage routes are most likely to have been intercepted in less deprived areas, and respondents on routes of intermediate usage are most likely to have been intercepted in more deprived areas. Respondents on high usage routes are most likely to have been intercepted in areas in the mid-range of IMD values.

Table 17: Relative distribution of cyclists on routes with varying usage densities split by IMD value categories

Deprivation level	**Density of usage of route**		
	Low usage	Intermediate usage	High usage
Low deprivation	119	94	97
Mid-range deprivation	60	79	138
High deprivation	57	166	58

n = 7845

The greatest propensity for modal shift from car to bicycle was exhibited by cyclists in low deprivation areas. Respondents at sites in high deprivation areas were more likely to be cycling as the main trip purpose. Respondents intercepted in low and mid-range deprivation areas were more likely to report that a car was not an available option for their trip.

Table 18: Relative distribution of cyclists in modal switch capacity groups split by IMD value categories

Deprivation level	**Capacity to use a car instead of cycling**		
	Could have used a car but chose not to	No, car not an available option	No, recreation is main trip purpose
Low deprivation	111	103	87
Mid-range deprivation	86	105	111
High deprivation	64	79	151

n = 6124

Table 19 illustrates higher rates of people new to cycling in high and mid-range deprivation areas, and starting to cycle again in mid-range deprivation areas.

Table 19: Relative distribution of cyclists by trip type categories split by IMD value categories

Deprivation level	**Cycling status**				
	New	Starting again	Occasional	Experienced occasional	Experienced regular
Low deprivation	91	85	103	96	103
Mid-range deprivation	112	146	106	109	90
High deprivation	119	94	78	103	103

n = 6211

Table 20 shows that a higher proportion of respondents intercepted at sites of high deprivation were making leisure trips, compared with respondents in areas of average and low levels of deprivation. Correspondingly, a lower proportion of cyclists in areas of high deprivation undertake trips for other purposes, most notably shopping trips. There was a much higher incidence of personal, education and commuting trips among respondents intercepted in less deprived areas, compared with those in areas of greater deprivation.

Table 20: Relative distribution of cyclists by trip type categories split by IMD value categories

Deprivation level	**Trip purpose**				
	Leisure	Personal business	Shopping	Education	Commuting
Low deprivation	91	135	111	123	119
Mid-range deprivation	106	39	152	64	76
High deprivation	121	52	15	64	65

n = 1929

With reference to the age structures of cyclists, distribution patterns are broadly similar across high and low areas of deprivation. Observed differences are not statistically significant.

Age

This section explores the difference between age groups in more detail. Table 21 illustrates the differences in the location of cycling activity between age groups. 35-44 and 45-59 year olds are more likely to be observed in rural areas than urban areas. The reverse is true for the younger and the oldest age categories.

Table 21: Relative distribution of cyclists among age categories split by age categories

Age	**Location**	
	Urban	Rural
16-24	107	87
25-34	102	97
35-44	97	105
45-59	99	102
60+	101	98

n = 9585

The proportion of new cyclists is highest among the younger age groups. Higher than typical proportions of cyclists who are starting to cycle again are recorded in the over 60 years and 25-34 year age categories. Occasional cyclists have a higher incidence than distributions across the

population among the 16-24 and 35-44 year age groups. Experienced regular cyclists are most common among those respondents aged over 60 years.

Table 22: Relative distribution of cyclists among self-reported cycling experience groups split by age categories

Age	**Cycling status**				
	New	Starting again	Occasional	Experienced occasional	Experienced regular
16-24	148	69	135	100	95
25-34	125	107	100	93	100
35-44	103	101	111	104	97
45-59	89	97	96	106	100
60+	56	115	66	89	110

n = 7560

Table 23 illustrates the increasing frequency of incidence of a car not being an available option among the younger age categories. The trend is reversed for the incidence of recreation being the main trip purpose – older age groups have a greater tendency to make recreational trips. The lowest incidence of apparent modal switch is among 16-24 year olds, and the highest among those aged 35-44, 45-59 and 25-34 years.

Table 23: Relative distribution of cyclists in modal switch capacity groups split by age categories

Age	**Capacity to use a car instead of cycling**		
	Could have used a car but chose not to	No, car not an available option	No, recreation is main trip purpose
16-24	80	174	74
25-34	101	109	93
35-44	107	90	100
45-59	102	85	107
60+	95	88	112

n = 7453

The proportion of shopping trips is higher among respondents in the over 60 years age group than among any other age group, and the groups most likely to be making trips for education purposes are 16-24 and 35-44 years age groups. The incidence of commuting trips is

higher among the younger age groups, while the likelihood of respondents making leisure trips increases as the age of the respondent increases.

Table 24: Relative distribution of cyclists by trip type categories split by age categories

Gender	Trip purpose				
	Leisure	Personal business	Shopping	Education	Commuting
16-24	85	102	58	370	141
25-34	91	97	61	80	134
35-44	94	38	98	114	124
45-59	106	129	83	38	85
60+	118	157	211	76	20

n = 2742

Discussion of results, implications for UK cycle planning, and further research

Just as national, mainly road-based, statistics on cycling draw attention to the disparities within and between particular sections of the population, so does the data for the traffic-free sections of the NCN. National data shows a great deal of disparity between the number of male and female users, and variation in trip type distribution. Traffic-free route data shows a similarly imbalanced ratio of male to female users, and variation in a number of areas. There is also considerable variation across age group categories evident in both of the data sources. While evidence on cycling and relative wealth in national statistics is based on income quartiles, the traffic-free route equivalent data is based on ward IMD data. In both cases there is strong evidence of variation between groups. There is no available national level data on cycling and ethnic group. However, traffic-free route data again suggests substantial variation between groups. We can therefore conclude that the groups traditionally regarded as excluded or disadvantaged, namely women, BME groups, the old, the young, and people from more deprived areas, make different use of traffic-free routes.

In terms of trip type, traffic-free route data highlights particular positives in terms of higher than expected representation of female cyclists, elderly cyclists and BME group cyclists on shopping trips, females and younger age groups on trips to educational establishments, and BME groups and younger age groups making commuting trips. Leisure trips are commonly undertaken by cyclists in older age groups and from areas with higher IMD values. BME group cyclists are less likely to make leisure trips, and people from more deprived areas are less likely to make utility trips.

Cyclists from BME groups are more in evidence among the younger age groups than the distribution among the surveyed population would suggest, but females from Asian/Asian British and Black/Black British groups are under-represented. Evidence on levels of experience shows disproportionate concentrations of relatively novice cyclists among females, BME groups, people from mid-

range deprivation areas, and the young on traffic-free routes. Many older cyclists are using the routes to start to cycle again. Traffic-free routes are generating new cyclists from the most deprived areas.

Further findings include:

- Female cyclists and BME cyclists use traffic-free routes for group cycling, and are disproportionately represented on busier routes.
- Females are not cycling as much as expected in deprived areas. BME group cyclists and young cyclists exhibit much greater concentrations in urban areas than in rural areas.
- Evidence of modal shift that is attributable to cycling on traffic-free routes is strongest among cyclists from less deprived areas, and the central age categories.
- There is a high incidence of reporting of a lack of access to a car among younger users, but not among cyclists from the most deprived areas.

Clearly the traffic-free routes on the NCN serve a vital function, and provide a resource for groups that would not otherwise cycle. However, further steps are required to further enhance the success of the routes. Practical programmes that might be instigated based on the data presented here may concentrate either on reinforcing the positive implications of the evidence, or addressing the apparent deficiencies of the role fulfilled by traffic-free routes. Initiatives to alter perceptions of the acceptability of cycling might, for example, see greater uptake of cycling by females in deprived areas, and by those with no access to a car in deprived areas. Alternatively, reinforcing the trends evident among BME groups of younger people cycling more, or raising or maintaining the levels of novice female cyclists, would add further value to the available network. Specific programmes of activity might include wide roll-out of women's cycling groups, or access to cycling in the countryside for BME groups. The permutations are many and varied, and would be dictated by marketing strengths and funding opportunities, and may even vary regionally.

Further research is required to better understand the trends emerging from this research, and to facilitate the successful delivery of programmes to encourage cycling. The habitual causal factors behind cycling on traffic-free routes, and cycling generally are not well researched. A better overview of these factors and the extent to which they impact on perceptions and participation would help policy development and planning at the national and regional level, and would assist a wide range of stakeholders, not least government, and partners in the continued delivery of the NCN. In particular, there is a fundamental need for the diversification from the essentially quantitative approach, towards something more qualitative, in an attempt to address the needs of those underrepresented via the intercept survey process. An increased level of direct consultation with users and non-users, will improve understanding of the habits and needs of potential users.

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Craig Moore, Centre for Public Policy, Northumbria University
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Bike film festivals:

Taking a cultural approach to cycling promotion in the UK

Dave Horton and Andy Salkeld
d.r.horton@lancaster.ac.uk

We all know the long list of reasons why cycling is worth promoting - health, fitness, obesity, peak oil, climate change, pollution, congestion, sustainability, quality-of-life, car dependency, social inclusion and justice. Such concepts have become part of the contemporary lexicon of cycling promotion.

But how best to promote cycling? This paper has three aims. First, to question the dominance of an infrastructural approach to cycling promotion in the UK. Second, to advocate an alternative, more cultural approach. And third, to describe a specific example of this cultural approach to cycling promotion, the bike film festival.

Different models of cycling promotion

In the UK, recent attempts to get more people cycling have emphasised infrastructural provision. The charitable organisation *Sustrans* is leading the development of the National Cycle Network. Many local authorities have been busy installing a wide variety of 'cycle friendly' infrastructures, from cycle lanes to bike parks, toucan crossings to tarmacadam speed cushions.

However, there is growing recognition that cycling promotion requires more than provision of infrastructure. The view that if we build enough 'safe' cycle routes ever more people will take to cycling seems increasingly untenable. Just as plausibly, such 'cycle-friendly infrastructure' contributes to a perception of cycling under 'ordinary' conditions as too dangerous, a perception liable to suppress cycling. So we need either a completely cycle-friendly network, which - because networks are never complete and because new kinds of conflict will always be generated - is impossible, or we need to find alternative ways to promote cycling.

The domination of engineers and planners within professional UK cycling promotion has resulted in promotional strategies becoming to some extent 'locked-in' to expert-dominated infrastructural projects, but there are growing signs of an emergent move away from this model, and towards greater provision of cycle training.

Increased emphasis on cycle training is based on two important realisations. First, if conditions for cycling can never be made

'perfect', then cyclists and potential cyclists must be taught how to confront conditions as they actually exist. Second, massive falls in UK cycling levels across the last half of the twentieth century have resulted in a major skills gap, with today's parents unlikely to be confident cyclists themselves, let alone able to help their children become confident cyclists. Thus we need professionals to teach people to cycle. Interestingly, the organisation behind the National Cycle Network has itself recently made the move to cycle training. Through its Bike It project, *Sustrans* employs eight schools cycling officers, whose role it is to promote cycling, including through cycle training.

Infrastructural improvements and training are vital to rosy cycling futures. They demand wholehearted, if not unreserved, support. However, we think there are important weaknesses in both these models of cycling promotion. Both are based on the sense of a deficit to be addressed (lack of cycling infrastructure and lack of cycling skills, respectively). Tackling such deficits gives professionals their purpose, and sets the ground for their expert practice. Thus both models depend on professional experts who 'know best' (how to build 'cycling infrastructure' and how to teach the practice of cycling). These experts are necessarily imbued in contemporary policy discourses; after all, from governmental and institutional perspectives, these discourses give cycling its current relevance, legitimacy and thrust.

Familiarity with contemporary policy discourses tends to encourage the *promotion* of cycling as something people *ought* to do (for the good of their health, fitness, wallet, community, town, planet); such familiarity does not encourage *celebration* of cycling as something people might *want* to do. One result is that cycling becomes a moral rather more than pleasurable practice.

Why is this a problem? In privileging the 'ought' over the 'want', moralised practices tend to be stripped of the pleasurable connotations they might once have had. Moralistic discourses also tend to reduce (and we use that word advisedly) a practice to something which is unproblematically 'good'. The practice loses a life of its own, as something that might often be good, but might equally sometimes be bad, reckless, daring, subcultural, deviant. In other words, by constantly 'talking up' a practice, privileging it as worthy, moral, good, and policy-relevant in multiple ways, we risk its existence as a living, complex and confusing practice, and one capable of having many different, and sometimes incompatible, meanings ascribed to it.

An alternative model

Cycling is celebrated in many ways which reflect its contemporary diversity. Every year, the York Cycle Show brings together thousands of cyclists in a collective affirmation and celebration of cycling. Most bike cultures hold their own specialised celebrations. Bike messengers, racing cyclists, BMXers, cycle campaigners, mountain bikers, cycle historians, and cycle tourists; all have gatherings where enthusiasts meet, chat, race, ride, eat and generally dwell in their shared love for the bike.

Already, each June in the UK, Bike Week harnesses this existing grassroots vitality to pull more people into cycling. Bike Week represents the highest profile week of national cycling activities. In 2005 there were more than 2,000 events, with 300,000 participants. But for anyone seeking to extend and improve current cycling promotion strategy portfolios, further uses can be made of existing bike cultures. Generally, we want to prioritise a cultural model. We believe cultural approaches to cycling ought neither to be neglected nor treated as optional extras to the 'real business' of infrastructural provision and cycle training; they should instead constitute a central plank in the raft of pro-cycling strategies. We see the bike film festival as an important recent addition to such a cultural approach to cycling promotion.

The bike film festival

Why consider bike film festivals as a means of promoting cycling? Because we sometimes try too hard to make cycling good. Meanwhile, despite our cries to the contrary, many people view cycling - and especially utility cycling - as difficult, dangerous, demeaning or deviant. In always saying 'yes' to cycling when so many are saying 'no', do we unwittingly contribute to a polarised view of the practice we care so much about, do we iron out all the complexities between the 'yes' and the 'no'? Bike film festivals are full of hugely diverse and unmanageable representations of cycling. The 'realities' of cycling on the screen are far more complex than 'good' versus 'bad', 'right' versus 'wrong'. We consider that complexity to be potentially more productive of healthier, because both more realistic and more plural, attitudes to cycling.

Through the unmanageable realm of cinematic representation, during a bike film festival cycling becomes many things. Cycling breaks free from its moral straitjacket. This is healthy. We cannot and ought not reduce cycling to either a virtue or duty. Cycling is a complex and highly variable practice. For many it is a passion. For many more it is ordinary, unthought, a vehicle which organises particular ways of life yet which remains overlooked, in the background. The bicycle contributes to narratives of adventure, romance and - perhaps most of all - escape. Bike film festivals create, capture and communicate the diverse worlds in which cycling is implicated.

Yes, in the end we want people to get on bikes, but an important mechanism towards this end is greater circulation of, and exposure to, diverse representations of cycling. So that cycling simultaneously becomes, on the one hand, more interesting, attractive and appealing and, on the other hand, more ordinary and acceptable.

Let's just think about the car. Films and television programmes of every genre have both fed romanticisation of the car, and reproduced its normality and centrality to everyday life. To give just a few examples; The Dukes of Hazard, Inspector Morse, Thelma and Louise, Noddy, Starsky and Hutch and Batman. Though not always a leading role, the car plays some role in an extraordinary amount of television and cinema. Its routine centrality in visual

media reflects, reproduces and cements its wider cultural centrality.

Similarly, bike film festivals render the practice of cycling both ordinary - something which is straightforwardly and routinely incorporated into existing ways of life, broader scripts and narratives - and special - something remarkable and worth basing films around, or making films about. As with the automobilised films which form so central a part of our cultural landscapes and with which we are so familiar, at bike film festivals the centrality of cycling is simultaneously rendered invisible and visible. This is the litmus test of cultural acceptance. As material objects become taken-for-granted, seamlessly fitting in with and forming part of wider worlds, their status shifts to 'the everyday'. The bicycle becomes no longer an object 'out of place', cycling no longer a practice 'out of the ordinary'. Cycling comes to fit. So like more dominant car films, bike films have a twin effect. Although they often celebrate and romanticise cycling, they simultaneously normalise it. Through representation then, cycling - like driving - again becomes an ordinary part of lived culture.

So a bike film festival is a political intervention aiming temporarily to centre and celebrate a cultural object and practice which is ordinarily and routinely marginalised, an attempt to push cycling inside the shifting boundaries of popular culture. The bike film festival is one strategy for mainstreaming cycling, not infrastructurally but culturally.

Bike film festivals around the world

Bike film festivals have become annual events in cities across the world. New York's festival was established in 2000, at the Anthology Film Archive in Manhattan. By the 4th festival, it had grown to include over fifty films, live music, mass bike rides and bike art events. To that extent, the 'film festival' label is a misnomer; we might instead conceive these events as more sensual encounters with the diverse worlds of cycling. Seeing, hearing, tasting, feeling and smelling cycling, beyond doing and applauding it. The festival's director, Brendt Barbur, states:

> The Bicycle Film Festival celebrates the bicycle. We are into all styles of bikes and biking. If you can name it - Tall Bike Jousting, Track Bikes, BMX, Alleycats, Critical Mass, Bike Polo, Cycling to Recumbents - we've probably either ridden or screened it. What better way to celebrate these lifestyles than through art, film, music and performance? We bring together all aspects of bicycling to advocate its ability to transport us in many ways.

(www.bicyclefilmfestival.com, accessed 3/6/06)

In 2006, the 6th Annual Bicycle Film Festival kicks off in New York in May, before continuing to Los Angeles, Minneapolis, Chicago, London, San Francisco, Sydney, Tokyo and Milan. Barbur claims that a 'fervor is brewing for bike culture in global urban centers. The films in the festival reflect the unadulterated passion cyclists have for their rides' (www.bicyclefilmfestival.com, accessed 27/8/05). Particularly striking about this celebration of cycling's diversity is how it contrasts with representations of cycling commonly promoted by cycling professionals, as a straightforward means of moving from A to B and back again. At a bike film festival, dare we suggest, cycling starts instead to feel, look, taste, smell and sound exciting.

Representations of cycling made available by film festivals communicate cycling as a practice in which it is possible to participate in all manner of ways - as a disaffected youth, poor woman or political subversive just as much as a sensible middle class urban commuter complete with waterproof jacket and sturdy panniers. Bike films prise open the monopoly on representations of cycling currently exe rted by its embeddedness in a masculine culture of competitive sports on the one hand, and policy discourses privileging health and environment on the other.

Leicester bike film festival

Leicester demonstrates that bike film festivals are emphatically not the preserve of an avant-garde or subcultural elite confined to big cosmopolitan cities. For the last 5 or 6 years, this medium-sized multicultural city of the English midlands has held its own bike film festival.

Leicester is one UK local authority that has embraced a cultural style of cycling promotion.

An example of the city's cultural orientation to cycling promotion is its 'Grassroots Cycling Workshop', held in September 2005. This event aimed to encourage the spread of various 'grassroots' cycling projects; it comprised

workshops for people wanting to learn more about, respectively, bike recycling projects, cycle training, bike festivals, and bike messenger services. As such, the event attempted to share skills and knowledge among people interested in cultural approaches to cycling promotion.

Tellingly, this event was no solitary exercise, in two respects. First, it built on previous capacity-building projects, such as a similar event the previous year. Second, the event itself was embedded in a day of more general celebration of cycling, including a bike ride, dinner, bike orchestra and party. In other words, in Leicester cycling is being seriously celebrated as much as it is being sensibly promoted.

Leicester's annual bike film festival fits the city's general cultural, grassroots orientation to cycling. The festival was established in 2001, at the Phoenix Art Theatre in Leicester. With a working budget of only £500, the 3rd festival attracted over one thousand people, launched a 'Make Your Own Bike Shorts' film competition, and was supported by an international animator from the film Belleville Rendezvous. The organisers gave away 180 free tickets to school and youth groups, eight free bikes, and 300 bike bells. The sell-out première of a Leicester-made BMX film attracted so many people, 350, that even the police turned up (we feel sure they enjoyed themselves).

Over the years, the festival has screened a remarkable range of bike films, everything from art-house classics such as Bicycle Thieves to activist-produced documentaries. A film about British cycle racing legend Tom Simpson attracted a coach-load of cycle tourists from their nearby cycle-camping weekend. But as with other film festivals, Leicester's festival is not just about films. Rather, film screenings work as spatially and temporally fixed events around which to organise a range of other pro-cycling activities. Open cycle speedway sessions, for example, formed part of Leicester's 2005 festival.

To the representations of cycling produced by the bike films themselves must be added those used to publicise and attract people to the festival, and to raise the local profile of cycling in general. Such promotion provides important opportunities to generate locally-relevant, positive and inclusive representations of cycling. Leicester is an intensely multicultural city, whilst cycling is a practice which is currently unevenly socially distributed.

Taking control of promotional materials enables powerful stereotypes to be broken and new associations to be built. For

example, Andy is currently working on changing the red, white and blue mod target style of the 'cycle-city-Leicester' logo into one with colours representing the city's different communities, something of a challenge for the cartridges in his printer given the 32 different ethnic communities in the city!

So both the selection of films and decisions on how to advertise them enable transgressions of more conventional ways of representing cycling. This work is important in extending the boundaries of the 'cycling we', the kinds of people who feel included in the reservoir of (potential) cyclists, those who might feel it is people like them who are being hailed by the advert (as a potential viewer of the film if not necessarily a potential cyclist). Production and distribution of diverse, and even surprising, representations of cycling ought to form a core part of contemporary cycling promotion.

2006 sees continued growth in bike film festivals. The international bicycle film festival is visiting more places than ever before. Meanwhile, Edinburgh in Scotland sees its first festival, and Lancaster in north west England has enjoyed a series of film screenings as part of the City Council's three year project 'celebrating cycling in city, coast and countryside', co-funded by Cycling England's cycling demonstration town project. The project was formally launched with a screening of Ted White's inspirational documentary Return of the Scorchers, featuring uplifting images of cycling from across the globe. Elsewhere in the UK, Derby, Stoke and Nottingham are all developing ideas with innovative local bite. Clearly, the idea is catching on.

Discussion and conclusions

Of course, just as there is no necessary correlation between building cycle infrastructure or providing cycle training and the actual practice of cycling, nor is there between feeling seduced by representations of cycling and the actual practice of cycling. So does it matter whether bike film festivals get more bums on saddles? Does it matter whether seeing

a bike film increases someone's chance of cycling?

We think not. Pro-cycling policy tends to hope for a simple and direct cause/effect model of behaviour change. If we provide a particular affordance to cycling, whether a cycle path, high-quality place to park, confidence in riding in traffic, or information about leisure cycling routes, this will somehow translate into more cycling journeys. Much cycling policy, in other words, aims very directly to effect behaviour change without going through the all important prism of culture.

This is a fundamental mistake. Culture always mediates guidance of actions and those actions themselves. Providing cycling facilities does not inevitably mean people will use them, teaching people to ride bikes does not guarantee they will cycle. Yes, we need cycling facilities and we need cycle training. But to see such modes of cycling promotion as translating directly into more cycling journeys ignores the complex ways in which motivations and actions are always mediated by culture.

Relatedly, we question any simple search for 'what works' in getting bums on saddles. Obviously we can and should learn through experiences, best practice and available evidence from elsewhere. We should also explore what is likely to represent value for money. But we should also seek to improve, and attempt to monitor, cycling's profile and social status, assessing whether it is becoming more normal, accepted, taken-for-granted. Such attitudinal shifts are essential precursors to getting - to use Cycling England's goal - 'more people cycling, more often'.

Cycling England's current cycling demonstration towns project will be the test of this, but 'what works' in getting 'more people cycling, more often' is likely to be a vision-led, multi-pronged pro-cycling strategy. This strategy should include bold deterrents to car use, major infrastructural improvements, substantial cycle training, and a range of cultural events including cycle try-outs, organised rides for all abilities, and bike film festivals. Such a multi-pronged strategy should have so many synergies, both intended and unintended, as to make it impossible to unravel what causes what.

We want to point to a paradox in much cycling promotion. Cycling enthusiasts, who cycle for pleasure, often try to sell cycling by appealing less to its pleasurable than to its moral character. In our well-intentioned promotional rhetoric, cycling is not so often fun as good or useful for something-or-other. Thus, somewhat ironically, we often adopt the same utilitarian logic which lies behind (endangered) utility cycling, and fail to capitalise on the pleasurable motivations animating (thriving) leisure cycling.

So our main reason for advocating greater use of the cultural model in cycling promotion is because it puts the fun back in cycling. We challenge both paid and voluntary cycling practitioners to become a bit less earnest and serious about promoting cycling. Bike films represent cycling 'warts n' all', and that's great. By screening bike films we indicate that cycling ought no longer to be the preserve of enthusiasts desperate to present their privileged practice in a good light. Instead,

we indicate it's time for cycling to shift back into the messy, mixed-up world. That is the democratisation of cycling, something we all want to see. Our implication, of course, is more resources - commitment, time, money - to cultural modes of cycling promotion, even if that is at the expense of infrastructural projects.

Let's shift cycling away from its current dominant framing as a moral practice, and encourage it to be seen instead as a predominantly pleasurable practice. Finally, then, let's go back to our opening paragraph. Perhaps one task is to begin rewriting it, or at least offer an alternative. Here's our first attempt:

There are endless reasons to celebrate cycling: cycling helps you smile; cycling makes you laugh; cycling makes breathing easier; cycling keeps you young; being naughty by bike is easy; cycling is the biggest free buzz in town; cycling energises; cycling's infectious; cycling's natural; cycling's different; cycling gives great views; cycling's freedom. Add your own ideas, help make such concepts part of the contemporary lexicon of cycling celebration.

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Dave Horton is Visiting Research Fellow at the Centre for Mobilities Research, Lancaster University, UK, an activist with Dynamo - the Lancaster and District Cycle Campaign, and initiator of Lancaster's first, 2006 season of bike films. Andy Salkeld is Cycling Co-ordinator at Leicester City Council, UK, and since 2001 has organised Leicester's annual bike film festival.

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