Cycling and Society 2017

Keynote

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Some thoughts re: what a social science approach to cycling offers

1. There is no blank canvas
2. People aren’t rational about risk but that doesn’t mean they’re irrational
3. We need to better measure what’s happening – and what’s not happening
4. Cycling is not a ‘choice’
There is no blank canvas
‘If only we had a blank canvas…..’
'If only we had a blank canvas.....'
But …
SEVEN little children showing off their tricks.
“Clever” one rode “no hands” — and then there were six!

KEEP YOUR HANDS ON THE HANDLEBARS

TWO little children riding fast for fun.
One was riding much too fast — and then there was one!

KEEP YOUR BICYCLE UNDER FULL CONTROL
(Lack of) political will and the persistence of car dominance

“[Scheme] has had all its funding removed by local council yet the council is currently assisting with a strategy for cycling and getting more people active.”

“[A] pedestrian [and] cycling crossing 14 years in the making was struck off by the councillor with the transport brief, after 12 objections each countered by an officer stating that this was a high volume pedestrian [and] cycling route.”

“Political leadership still seems to view the car as the key to economic growth. Large businesses in our town with parking problems are given sympathy and encouragement to extend their car parks.”

“At a time of very restricted public finances the priority is given to highway capacity and cycling not considered as a legitimate mode of transport hence difficult to justify additional costs.”

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Source: survey of stakeholders in England on barriers to investing in cycling (2016)
2. People aren’t rational about risk but that doesn’t mean they’re irrational
[Cycle] training is the main thing that we promote and encourage to get children confident on the roads, sometimes people talk about cycle lanes being the erm... kind of this magical solution of put in a cycle lane and it’s automatically safer but actually other studies have shown that if there is a cycle lane in then... which to be fair in London there is not an awful lot of space to put them in but if we put cycle lanes in then the cars actually drive closer to the line and end up driving closer to cyclists and if there isn’t then cyclists, then cars give the cyclists more space.

(Catherine, Hackney: local authority officer)
‘I already approach this junction, and indeed every portion of the campus where I have to cycle on the road, with considerable caution. I can only attempt to cycle even more cautiously in future.’

‘My heart stopped. But this happens every time. This is a terrifying interchange for cyclists.’

‘An accumulation of these events over the years has made me super cautious, and I now believe it’s not sufficient simply to obey the rules to stay alive. To stay alive one must also anticipate that all others will be careless.’

Source: Near Miss Project (2014-5)
And experienced risk is relative…
Changes in injury risk by mode, 91-11

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<tr>
<td>KSIs per 1000 commuters, motor vehicle users</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>-27.0%</td>
<td>-50.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>KSIs per 1000 commuters, pedestrians</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>-36.6%</td>
<td>-40.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KSIs per 1000 commuters, cyclists</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>-35.6%</td>
<td>+3.4%</td>
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Current paper with Goel, Woodcock, Goodman – data from DfT & ONS/Nomis
3. Data matters
Breaking out of the vicious cycle (& how researchers can help…)

No decent cycle infrastructure or policies

Impossible to plan for current or future cycling

Cycling ignored or marginalised in modelling

Cycling data not collected (too difficult, why bother)

Hardly any cycling
Improving evaluation

More expensive / more rigorous / more detailed insight

More in-depth/qualitative

Intercept surveys + counts - estimate take-up and health benefits

Longitudinal surveys (quantitative) – very high quality evidence on uptake

Cross-sectional qualitative interviews – views about intervention and its impacts

Qualitative longitudinal research – study how and why views change over time

Examples only!
Analysing what is happening is important…

…but analysing what isn’t happening can be equally important
Making cycling potential visible
Mapping commuter cycling potential

Source: [www.pct.bike](http://www.pct.bike), current DfT-funded project led by Dr James Woodcock, collaboration with Cambridge, Leeds, Westminster Universities
Mapping risk as well as injury
Cycle KSI numbers per London borough, 2005-15

Source: Stats19
Cycle KSI risk per London borough, 2005-15

Source: Stats19, Census 2011 borough cycling volume calculation via PCT.bike
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Report it</th>
<th>Roads</th>
<th>Parking</th>
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<td><strong>Public transport</strong></td>
<td><strong>Public rights of way</strong></td>
<td><strong>Alternative ways to travel</strong></td>
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<td>Concessionary passes, timetables, bus lanes and community transport.</td>
<td>Includes how to request changes or closures.</td>
<td>Cycling, walking and car sharing.</td>
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“Oh I would say an avid cyclist is somebody who like, they live and breathe it really. You know the sort, you’ll see them when you’re driving somewhere going up a really steep hill and all you can see is these legs like tree trunks (laughter).” (Hull, male, 40s)

“It also makes a statement to people that you actually are not just somebody who’s jumped on a bike. You’re actually saying, I’ve got the uniform of a cyclist here.” (Cambridge, male, 50s)

“Not many people have electric bikes and you feel a little bit of a fraud.” (Cambridge, female, 50s)

“I don’t really wear anything high viz and I don’t wear a helmet even though I know I should.” (Hull, female, teens)

“I’m not very good at looking after my bike. I don’t. I’m not good at maintaining it, I’m afraid (laughs)”. (Hull, female, 50s).

Source: Cycling Cultures research, 2010-2
Thinking beyond Mr C.I.D. (and other problematic ‘cyclists’)
Cycling as a (discriminatory) service/system

– Not a choice but a **system** or **service** - one which currently excludes many people

– We always need to think how bike infrastructure (quality, location, directness, traffic and social safety, etc.) and other parts of the cycling system (cost and availability of specialist cycles, hire bike locations, policing, etc.) enable and/or exclude – and the equalities implications of this
Cycling for All

– Finally, a short film illustrating the difference cycling can make to everyone – if we tear down the barriers and enable cycling
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