

# 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.....’**



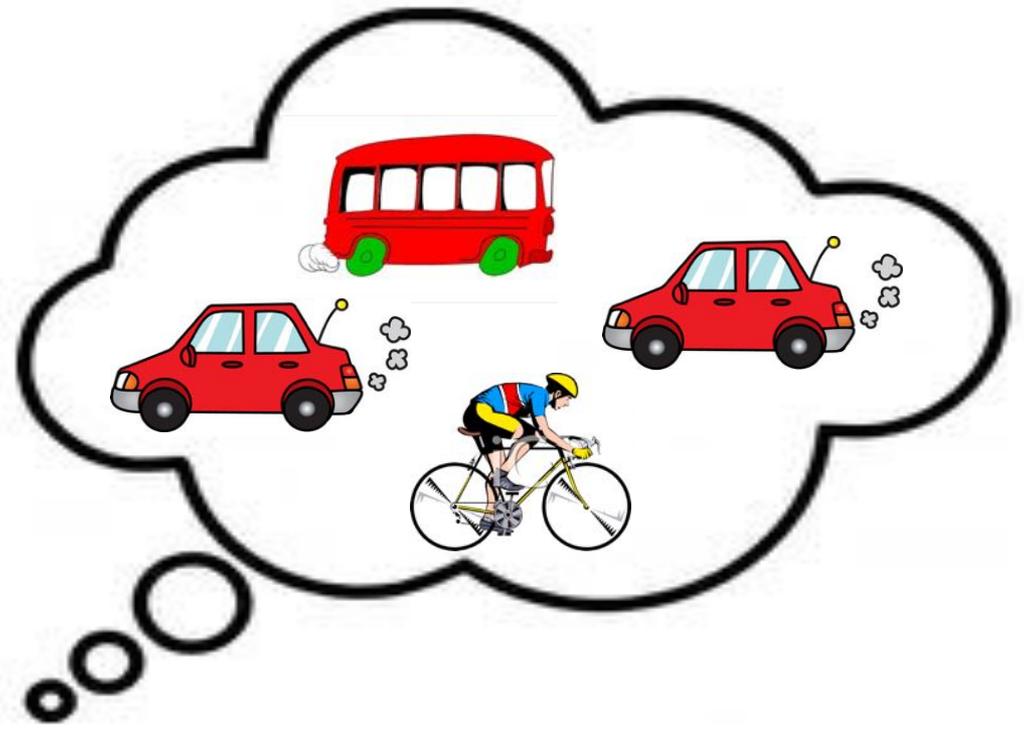
But ...



Pictures: Google, Kingswood, Hull



Pictures: Google, Ella Street, Hull



**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.”

“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.”

“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.”

“[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.”

***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)



**Source: Cycling Cultures research**

‘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.’

**Experienced (not just “perceived” safety) is important...**

**with one ‘very scary’ incident a week for regular UK cyclists**

***Source: Near Miss Project (2014-5)***

**And experienced risk is relative...**

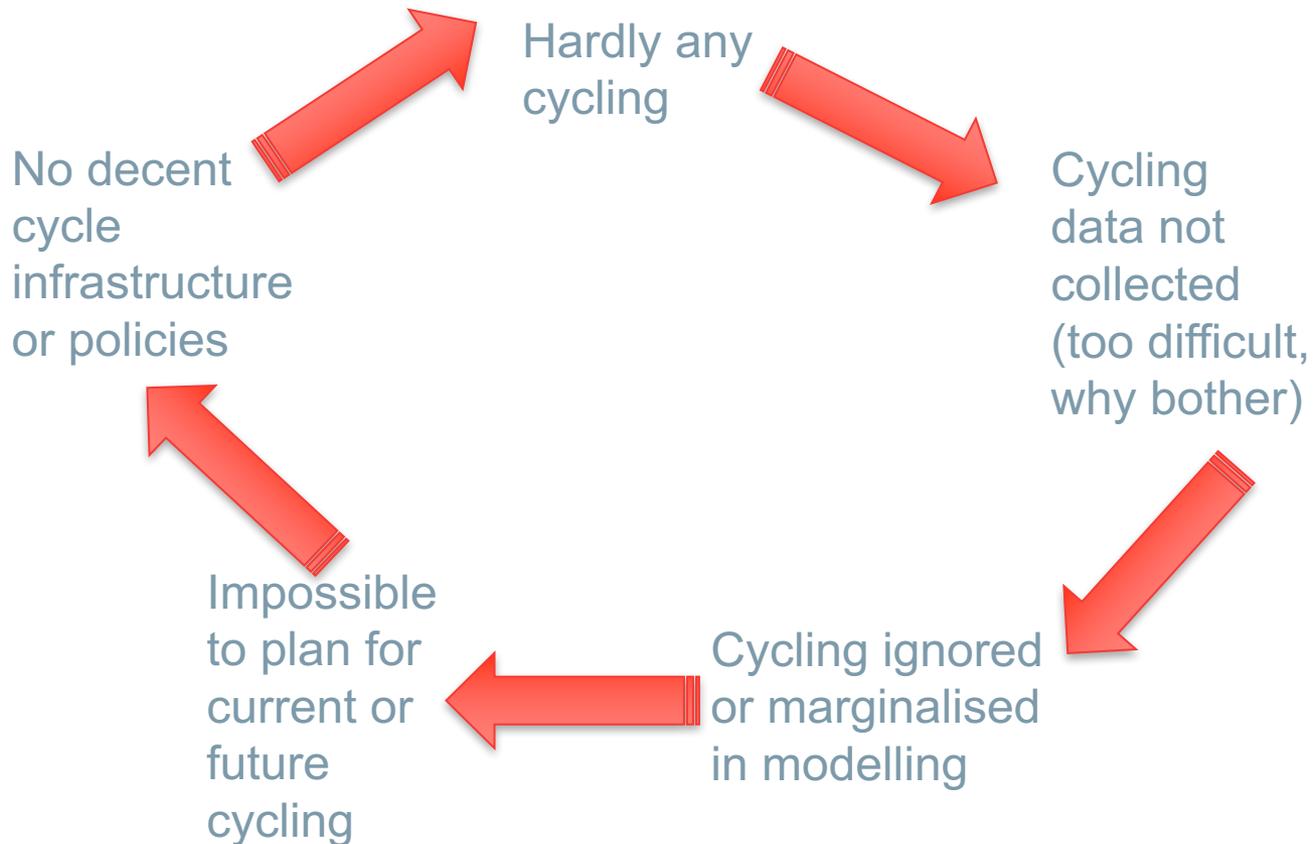
## Changes in injury risk by mode, 91-11

|  | 1991 | 2001 | 2011 | Relative change, 1991-2001 | Relative change, 2001-11 |
|--|------|------|------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| KSIs per 1000 commuters, motor vehicle users | 6.3  | 4.6  | 2.3  | -27.0%                     | -50.0%                   |
| KSIs per 1000 commuters, pedestrians         | 16.4 | 10.4 | 6.2  | -36.6%                     | -40.4%                   |
| KSIs per 1000 commuters, cyclists            | 18.0 | 11.6 | 12.0 | -35.6%                     | +3.4%                    |

Current paper with Goel, Woodcock, Goodman – data from DfT & ONS/Nomis

### **3. Data matters**

## Breaking out of the vicious cycle (& how researchers can help...)



# Improving evaluation

More expensive / more rigorous / more detailed insight

More in-depth/qualitative

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

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

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

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



Pic: Cycling Canada advertisement

# 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



# Cycle KSI risk per London borough, 2005-15



Source: Stats19, Census 2011 borough cycling volume calculation via PCT.bike

# Not a choice... beyond the 'ABC' (Elizabeth Shove)



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## Roads, parking and travel

### Report it

Report faults with roads, street lighting and public rights of way

### Public transport

Concessionary passes, timetables, bus lanes and community transport

### Flooding in Lancashire

### Roads

Roadworks, street lights, potholes and gritting

### Public rights of way

Includes how to request changes or closures

### Winter in Lancashire

### Parking

Permits, blue badges and penalty notices

### Alternative ways to travel

Cycling, walking and car sharing



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### Parking

Permits, blue badges and penalty notices

### Alternative ways to travel

Cycling, walking and car sharing

“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)

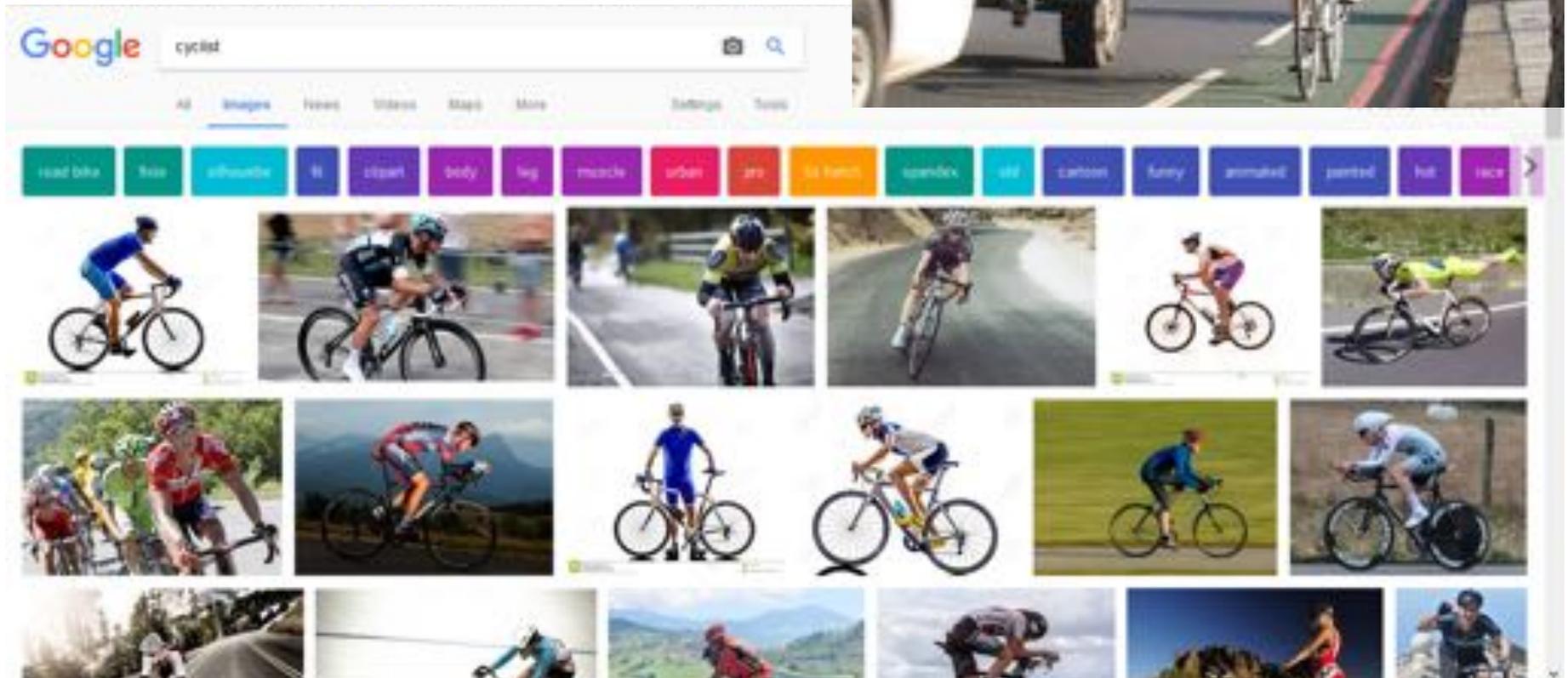
“Not many people have electric bikes and you feel a little bit of a fraud.” (Cambridge, female, 50s)

“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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