

Making the personal political



Overlaps in feminist theory and cycle activism

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Involvement & interest

The basis for my analysis

- Auto/ethnographic look at newcycling.org (Newcastle's local cycle campaign) which I co-founded in 2010
- Reading of literature on feminism (as part of my PhD)

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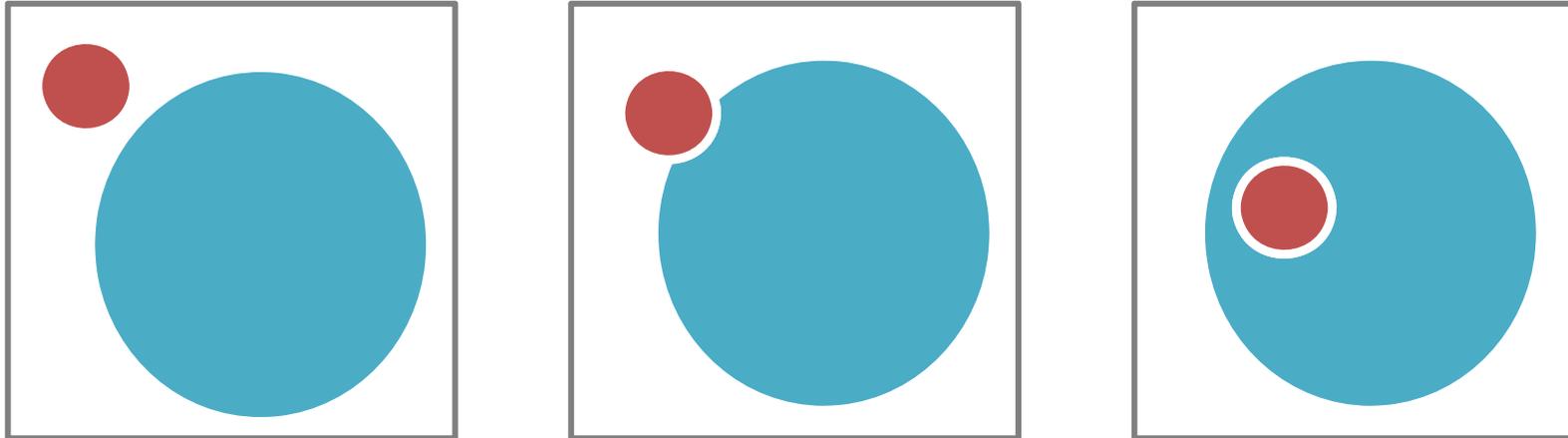
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*A fair deal
for women*

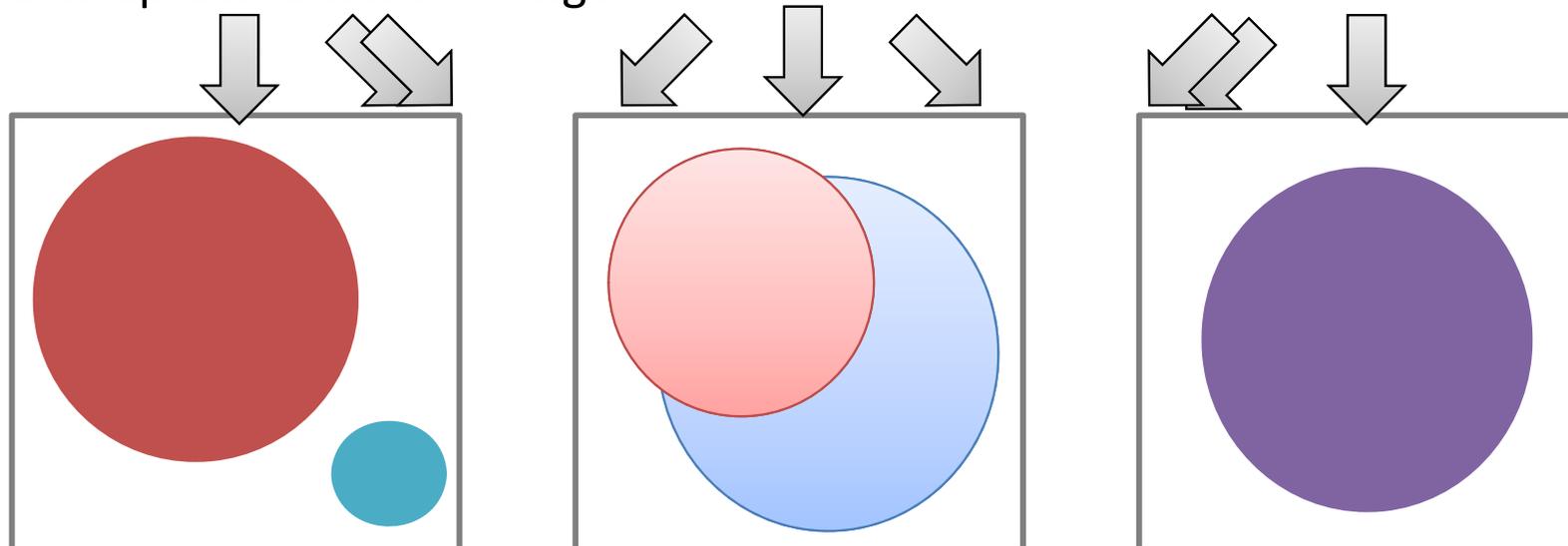
Making it happen

Position in society / dominant paradigm / norm >> out/in



Where does change come from? How does change happen?

Conceptualisation of change



The personal is political

Second wave

Researcher, personal experience

Truth/knowledge production

Positivism

Epistemology :

All can be known

Methods :

Quantitative

Researcher :

All knowing

Objective outsider



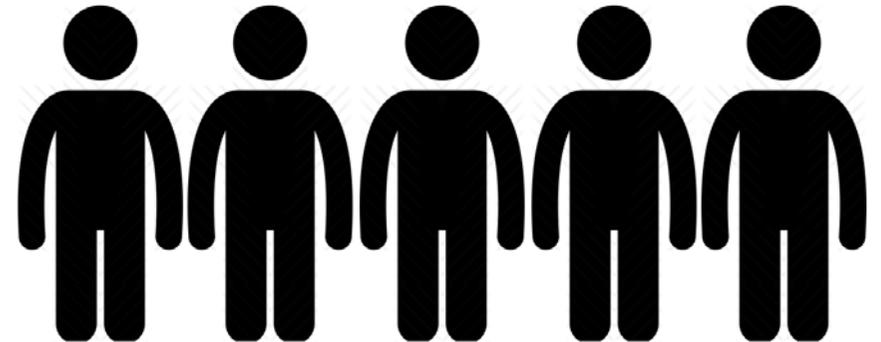
Constructivism

Bits can be glimpsed

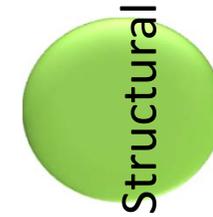
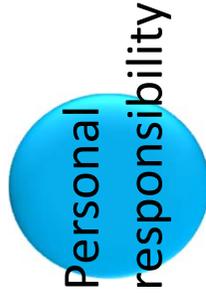
Qualitative/quant/mixed

Participant

Part of the equation



Experiencing the political



Name

Conservative

Liberal

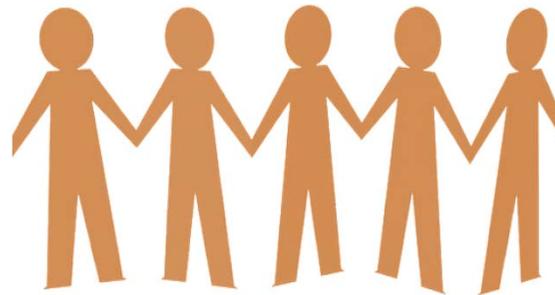
Radical

Characteristic : Individual strength
State role : Administrative
Action level : "You"

Societal learning
Educational
"Us"

Systems
Social-supportive
"Bigger than us"

Symbol :



Comparison to transport cycling

	Transport cycling	Feminism
Outcome :	Social change	
Dominant f/norm :	Automobility	Masculinity
Approach :	Subjective/inclusive safety	Personal experience
Framework :	Include the environmental context	
	Socio-ecological model	Social construction

Comparison to transport cycling

- ✓ Transforming urban design = **radical** demands
- ✓ Social justice by **radical** demands

Campaigning

Personal
responsibility
(conservative)

Social norm
(liberal)

Structural
(radical)

Political view ...
Policy ...
Strategy ...
Demands...
Methods...



Conclusion

Parallels can be drawn between feminism and cycle campaigning

- **History and progression**
- **Demands**
- **Approaches**

In the UK (and elsewhere), cycle campaigning has undergone a shift from **liberal** to more **radical** strategies and demands in recent years

This shift necessitates **new skills and strategies** to be used and explored :

- To orchestrate effective actions, cycle organisations should adjust to new realities
- Needs collaborative working models and a sharing attitude

Potpourrie of feminist authors

Jean Baker Miller, Sharon Beder, Simone de Beauvoir, Liz Bondi, Chris Booth, Judith Butler, Beatrix Campbell, Rachel Carson, Nancy Chodorow, Raewyn Connell, Dorothy Dinnerstein, Margrit Eichler, Carolyn Ellis, Nancy Fraser, Betty Friedan, Clara Greed, Margaret Grieco, Sally Hacker, Susan Hekman, Jane Jacobs, Jill Kirkup, Ursula Lehner-Lierz, Jo Little, Judith Lorber, Doreen Massey, Linda McDowell, Margarete Mitscherlich, Nancy A Naples, Kate Nash, Ann Oakley, Laurie Pickup, Shulamit Reinharz, Helen Roberts, Sue Sharpe, Dorothy E Smith, Rebecca Solnit, Daphne Spain, Gloria Steinem, Deborah Stone, Deborah Tannen, Elisabeth Wajcman, Carolyn Whitzman, Mary Wollstonecraft, Sue Zielinski ...

Abstract

I start from the point that a lack of conceptual oversight is one major trap that cycle activism can be ensnared in – especially at a time when democracy and democratic processes are in crisis. Where can cycle activists turn for knowledge and ideas?

With that backdrop in mind “What can cycle activism learn from feminism?” is a question worth asking: not only does feminism hold a rich and undulating history of activism, it can also provide academic theory and concepts relevant to cycle advocacy and academia. Employing feminist theory and revisiting the history of feminism I want to draw out parallels to cycle activism. I also hope to uncover new avenues for cycle activism to advance its radical cause for social justice: happy citizens and their communities in healthy cities with prospering local economies.

The basis for my analysis is an auto/ethnographic look at newcycling.org (Newcastle’s local cycle campaign, founded in 2010). I will compare newcycling.org’s origins and progress (its linkages with politics and inter/national cycle activism) to radical feminist theory, thus plotting parallels, overlaps, diversions and partings. In closing, learning from the comparison, I will attempt to draw an outlook for an emancipated cycle activism.

Thank you!

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