Cycling and diverse mobility dispositions

(Comparing) cycle practices in Aberdeen, (Reykjavik and Copenhagen)

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Cycling & Society Symposium
University of Chester, 2-3 September 2019

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2020
CiViTAS
Cleaner and better transport in cities
SATELLITE

PORTIS

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Introduction

- Cities in postcarbon transitions
- Cycling as active choice
- Cycle mobility is social as well as bodily and environmental

Main research question

→Why different urban contexts have adverse effects on people's disposition for and motivation to everyday cycling – and how this is socially loop-sided

Compare dispositions for cycling in 3 Northern cities – here focus on Aberdeen, Scotland

Analytical framework: Social equality in dispositions to cycling
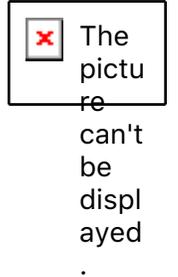
Social equality – two takes

- Correlation with stratified groups in cyclists
- Social capital
  - The ability to take advante of cycling
  - Socialisation
  - Level of education
  - Access to cycles and cycle infrastructure – availability, economic means
  - Health and ability – ceteres paribus

Work in progress…..

Analytical framework: Practice theory

PRACTICE

Routinized ways in which bodies are moved, objects are handled, subjects are treated, things are described and the world is understood

- Practices – at the collective level
- Focus on the DOING
- Practices are performed by 'agents' through corporal movements and discursive / articulated signs

→A way of conceptualising cycle and mobility culture
- Links to disposition for cycling at a collective – societal – level

Practice theory

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Analytical framework

Meaning
- The knowledge and discourses the draw up the mental maps (individually and collectively)
- At the level of the individual actor and of the collective actors or community – relational and socio-culturally embedded

Competences are skills and techniques that
- Enable practices
- Are contextualised jointly with particular practices

Materiality is the body and the tangible world with which we interact through performing and enacting practices
- The body and nature
- Objects and infrastructures

Changes in practices
- Deviations in performance
- Alterations in meanings, competences and/or materialities

City of Aberdeen

ABERDEEN CITY CENTRE KEY

- Bicycle Parking
- Bike Shop
- Care Needed
- Toucan Crossing / useful Pedestrian Crossing
- Recommended Route
- On Road Cycle Lane
- Bus, Cycle and Taxi Lane
- Dual Use Path
- Busy but Useful Road
- National Cycle Network: Route 1
- Dual Carriageway
- Other Road
- Restricted Road & Pedestrianised
- Rail
- Buildings
- Parks
- River/Lake
- Car Park - Multi-storey/covered
- Car Park - Open Air
- Church Symbol
- Public Toilets

Cycle Security:
Following these basic security rules can help against losing your bike.

Aberdeen Royal Hospital (no cas.)
Aberdeen Tech. Coll.
Bowl Alley
R.G.U.
Arts Centre
Gordon's Coll.
University (Marischal Coll.)
Lemon Tree
Health Centre
Library
His Majesty's
Ben Skene's Accord Hse Centre
Police H.Q.
St Andrew's Cath.
Mercat Cross
Peacock Gallery
Shop Centre
Art Gall. & Cowdray Hall
Don's Hse
Town Hse
Mar Bldgs
YMCA
St Mary's Cathedral
Provost Ross's Hse / Maritime Mus.
Cin.
Market
Music Hall
Trinity Shop Centre
Bus Sta.
Harbour Offices
Ferry Terminal (Orkney & Shetland)
Upper Dock
Victoria Dock
P.O.
Cin.
Station
Union Square Shop Centre
Goods Depot
Fish Markets
Albert Basin
Swimming Pool

Cycle practices in Aberdeen

Perceptions and meaning

"I enjoy being out in nature: hearing, smelling and seeing all around me. It makes me happy and I feel free

"I cycle pretty much every day and have had drivers turn in front of me, cut me up and give me abuse because they believed they had priority even although the highway code would say otherwise."

"Aberdeen has particularly aggressive car driver[s] who don't seem to tolerate cycling. They take advantage of stereotypes to justify their abuse of cyclists on the road and on social media"

Cycle practices in Aberdeen

Competences

"*Those who break rule of the road or act in an elitist way give cyclists a bad name*"

"*...am constantly being screamed at by drivers to keep left on roads where I need to adopt the primary position to avoid parked cars and being doored*"

Bicycle maintenance skills

Cycle practices in Aberdeen

Materialities (1)

"…cycle lanes are an afterthought, painted lines on a road"

"…shared use routes which don't work well at peak times due to lack of 'rules' or [consideration] by users (bikes and pedestrians) about how to use shared space responsibly"

"…the actual state of the road is the biggest risk to cyclists. For example, a cyclist travelling at 20mph who has to make a change of direction suddenly because of a hole, or dropped iron-wear into the path of other road users."

Cycle practices in Aberdeen

Materialities (2)

"*...there are hardly any safe cycling routes and even these are not continuous routes … require some of the journey to be shared with motorised vehicles.*"

"*Instead of 'safety' cameras being set up on main roads to catch speeder, how about safety cameras being used to monitor driving behaviours in built up areas? Manners and respect should not be seen as a weakness*"

Tentative conclusions….

Why different urban contexts have adverse effects on people's disposition for and motivation to everyday cycling – and how this is socially loop-sided

Strands of Aberdonian cycle practices
- Emerging cycling culture
  - Very contested
  - For whom?
- Urban materialities sort of reject cycling as a legitimate mode of Aberdeen transport
  - Shared spaces, lack of infrastructure
  - City space adapted to cars – and pedestrians

Tentative conclusion....

Equality and disposition to cycle
- Among cyclist community and road users – tribalism (us and them)
- Only adapted to the fit and very capable – not elderly and children (saftey)
- Not for commuters (time)
- Invisible in Aberdeen transport policy
- The very limited number of actual cycle infrastructure stratifies the city
- Gendered – women feel less safe and are perceived as less capable cyclists

Reykjavik

- Non-disputed decision to build a cycle track network – cycling as a mode of transport

- Positive events – citizens

- Conflicts when speed blocks for cars – but not really

CPH

- Actual mode of transport

- Decade of cycling has developed a cycling culture and visibility in the city - Normalised mobility practices

- Conflicts between different user groups and over-crowded cycle tracks

But how to identify the social groups that form in the emerging cycling cultures?