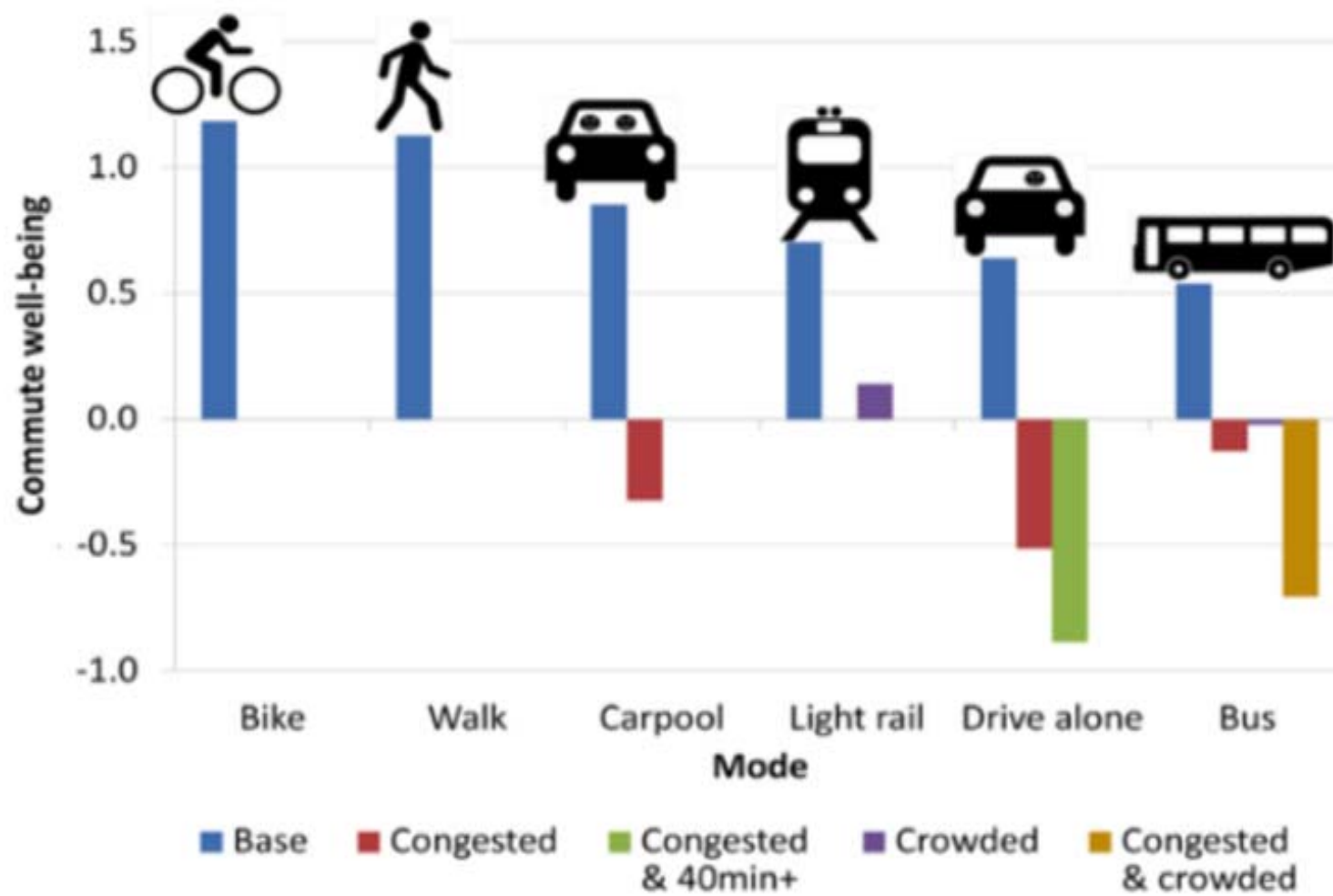


Why are cyclists the happiest commuters?

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Uniquely satisfied: Exploring cyclist satisfaction

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Abstract

Despite increasing interest and focus on cycling planning and infrastructure, many research and policy frameworks overlook two important aspects of cycling: motivations and trip satisfaction. While many studies have found that cyclists are more satisfied with their commute than other mode users, few have explored why. We hypothesize that different types of cyclists—defined by their reasons for cycling and seasonal mode patterns—will derive different levels of satisfaction from cycling. Therefore, this study attempts to (1) examine the effect of built environment characteristics (e.g., intersection density and land use), trip characteristics (e.g., distance and slope) and season on cycling trip satisfaction, (2) group respondents into “cyclist types” based on a cluster analysis of motivations for cycling and their alternate (winter) mode, and (3) understand how these personal characteristics moderate the relationship between built environment and trip characteristics and expressed trip satisfaction. This is

Our inheritance

- Emergence of concept of 'travel liking'.
- Transport planning remains dominated by models of transport 'efficiency',
- Travel as “nothing more than ‘clock time’ passing” or “dead time” that people seek to minimize.

Why?

Data sources: Cycling ethnography, exercise science, transport psychology, our e-bike interview research

- 1) Commuting control
- 2) Sensory stimulation
- 3) The 'feel better' effects of exercise
- 4) Social interaction

Commuting control

- Flexible, nimble, relatively ‘undisciplined’ form of transport
- Opportunities for ‘polite deviance’
- High levels of ‘arrival-time reliability’ and ‘self-efficacy’, control
- High levels of ‘Commuting competence’

Arrival time reliability – Control over your life

“So the bike is not always quicker, it is often quicker but not always. But I justify it in that it is always exactly the same. You are plus or minus five minutes. So I can do it in 40 minutes or 45 minutes. ...You could leave for work [in a car] and sometimes it is 15 minutes and sometimes it is 45 minutes, and if you are going to pick the kids up you can't be plus or minus an hour.” (E-cyclist 5)

Sensory activation

- Cyclists describe how cycling makes their 'sensory hairs stand on end'.
- High levels of multi-sensory activation
- Different types of sensory activation
- Exercise + outdoors = reduced rumination
- 'Commuting atunement' "state of relaxed observation and appreciation of one's surroundings"
- Sensory overload

Being outdoors - Noticing

“I realised that when you are on your bike, even though the road you went on is just there and you are cycling just here, and it is maybe just 5 to 20 metres away from the road that you have driven on for years, actually you see things because you are on a bike and you are slower and you can stop and look to the side and not crash into someone. ...So I saw these things, just like trees and greenery and hills and little reserves and little picnic tables and then I see plaques, little historic plaques.” (E-cyclist 23).

Commuting attunement - Flow

- “Yeah. It’s weird cos I’m not really in the nature but I feel like I’m in nature. I’m going past a tree and I’m just like, oh so pretty. Yeah, and you go past the water and oh so pretty. So, I feel like it’s nice. It’s a pleasant journey, I suppose. Yeah. I keep saying to my friend it takes me 40 minutes but it feels like a 10 minute bike ride.” (E-cyclist 18)

The 'feel better' effects of moderate exercise

- No settle consensus on why
 - Moderate intensity exercise provided by cycling most enjoyable and sustainable
 - Mental alertness and improving mood

Exercise and mood

“I hated when I was having to do the drop offs, because the girls aren't locally at school, I was just hating it, I don't get to kind of move, you know. And I sit on my arse on the way, with everybody else whose sitting on their arses, in little air conditioned bubbles, I just hate it, it starts making me a bit grumpy, whereas you feel quite happy when you have a bit of a cycle to work. ...Definitely I'm a person whose mood improves if I exercise.” (E-cyclist 21)

“It is a healthy level of exercise. When my joints allowed me to run I used to enjoy running because it meditative and there is that pleasant level of exercise. You can get that on a bike. Particularly an e-bike because the unpleasant levels of exercise involved in getting up a steep hill are removed.” (E-cyclist 17).

Social interaction

- Social interaction and social trust



Bus view



Car view



Pedestrian view



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Hoody, goody or buddy? How travel mode affects social perceptions in urban neighbourhoods

Birgitta Gatersleben  , Niamh Murtagh , Emma White 

- Aldred - 'flexible opportunities for social interaction'

“You get to see a lot more, you know and you can go sort of, you can take shortcuts and you know so you get to sort of know the neighbourhood a lot better I think, you know you can greet people, you can say hi”. (E-cyclist 18)

“Yeah me and my friend we had a lovely ride last week, we just meandered along and talked, and all these different people were out there, someone was walking a dog and someone was jogging, and you just say hello” (E-cyclist 3)

‘Oh, I like chatting with the other bikers. My car’s really old, it’s got no radio. Silence. Fifty minutes of silence thinking in my own head, it’s really not fun. I went past some guy yesterday and he had a high viz with "Dad" printed on the back. I was like “so cool”. My fluorescent jacket is the pinkest thing you’ve ever seen with a flashing light in it at the back. And, he says, "You think *my* high viz is cool?!" You just don’t get that in the car. Yeah, so I think that’s probably one of my favourite things. (E-cyclist 19)

Flexible social interaction

“[I]n terms of commute I could either drive, take the train or cycle. Driving is horrendous, it makes me really anxious, no one is very friendly. The train is pretty good, you can read, but when people are, sometimes other people aren't having a good day and they're a bit in your face. ...And [with cycling] it's actually quite social if you want it to be, and I often chat to people at the lights because I'm chatty, but you don't have to if you don't want to, and you can also go fast or not go fast depending on how you're feeling, like it's quite adjustable.” (E-cyclist 16)

Planning - Bicycle 2.0

- Beyond 'commuting stress', highlighting and building upon existing possibilities for commuting pleasure.
- Focus on 'experience of the network' – *enhancing opportunities for commuting attunement:*

“Providing routes where cycling is uncomplicated enough to permit cyclists to spend time viewing the scenery. Or, it might involve focusing routes where the level of detail of the context is such that it can be easily perceived from the speed of a bicycle—less detail needed than for a pedestrian but more than for a motorist.” (Forsyth & Krizek, 2011:535).

- Enhancing opportunities for socialising on a bike

- Aldred - Rebranding cycling as 'productive and efficient' to increase legitimacy – stigmatised riding abreast and fun and play.
- Dualism between commuter and leisure cycling
- Larsen's autoethnography: Copenhagen and London

Social pleasures of cycling: Wide lanes that demand 'only basic fitness and partial attention', "with a heterogeneous mix of fellow cyclists, both men and women, young and old. Couples and friends cycle abreast and parents cycle with children. Others are on the phone or smoking a fag. Many listen to music."

- How can we build in more of what works for cyclists.