HEALTH BEHAVIOUR CHANGE RESEARCH GROUP

Walking and cycling journeys on shared-use paths; the user perspective

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ScotCen Social Research

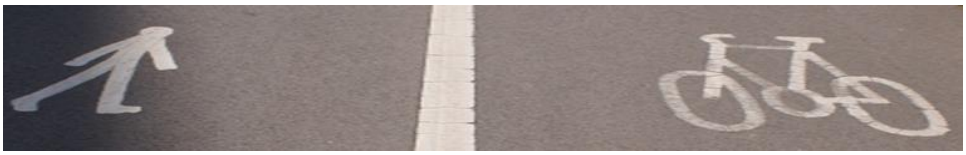
Outline

- Introduction
- Context
- Methods
- Findings
- Conclusion

Shared-use path

Few Regulations

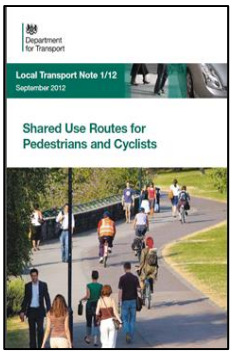
- Cyclists are legally required to keep to their side of the segregation (Highway Code, 2012)
- Cyclists are legally required to cycle with *'due care and attention'* and with *'reasonable consideration for others'* (Road Traffic Act, 1991)



Code of Conduct

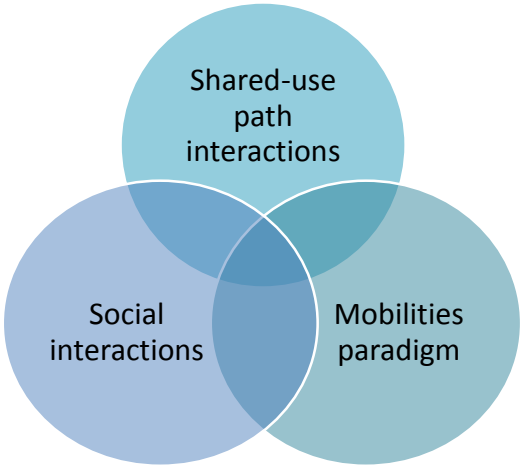
- Most common approach is to quantify and categorise behaviours and sharing practices

- *"No collisions and no conflict of any significance were observed…the vast majority of cases of interaction…were relatively inconsequential" (Atkins,2012)*



- Non-visible experiential interactions also important to consider

Literature Context



Mobilities Literature

- Specific focus on the personal experience of travel
- An exploration of 'the act of moving itself' (Adey, 2010)
- Sensory and embodied experiences (e.g.: flow, rhythm)

"What if we were to open up all sites, places, and materiality's to the mobilities that are always already coursing through them?"
(Sheller & Urry, 2006)

Social Interactions

- Identity formation and preservation
- Group dynamics

Social Identity Theory:

"social categorisation into in-group (a group to which one belongs) and out-group (a group to which one does not belong) provides the germ for the development of a group based social identity"

(Hewstone *et al.*, 2010:104)

Social Interactions

- Those who commute may view leisure users as different /part of the out-group
- This may cause them to interact differently
- Identities are developed and maintained based on social categorisation process
- Transport identity – identifying with a particular group based on mode

Research Aims

To consider the visible and non-visible aspects of walking/cycling journeys on shared-use paths and explore…

1. How path users share space and the types of interactions that occur
2. The differences in walking and cycling experiences and the impact on interactions
3. Expectations and attitudes towards the path

Methodological Approach

Phase I
On-site intercept surveys with path users

Phase II
In-depth interviews with cyclists and pedestrians using video recordings of personal journeys as a discussion tool

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In-depth interviews with cyclists and pedestrians using video recordings of personal journeys as a discussion tool

Cameras

- Head cameras mostly used when implementing mobile video methods
- Discrete mini cameras more appropriate to capture interactions – less obtrusive

Pedestrian camera

Cyclist camera

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Findings

1. How path users share space and the types of interactions that occur
2. The differences in walking and cycling experiences and the impact on interactions
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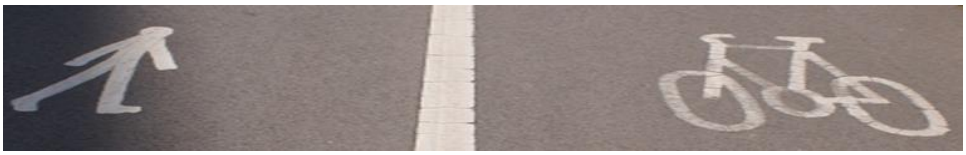
1. Sharing practices

- Required to:
  - make 'judgement calls' about other path users
  - put trust in other path users
- Related to the ambiguous regulatory and policy setting of shared-use paths



'So you have to sort of judge the other person's movement…where they're going to be at in relation to the other people and what they're going to do in front of you… it's a big judgement call'

'I'm waiting for some reaction from them to show that they've heard it [bike bell]…if I don't see any kind of reaction like a move aside or sometimes a glance over the shoulder then I will definitely slow down'

'I mean he caught me by surprise actually that time, yeah most cyclists would hang back at that point not knowing if I was turning right or straight on…he's coming up behind me and just over taking me'

- Path users attempting to read and predict one another and this is not always accurate
- Often take risks
- Survey: types of interactions experienced on the day of the survey
- Near collision/near miss - 6% of the overall reported interactions

Transport Identities

'I smiled at them yeah…quiet often I will because I think, oh well they're doing the same thing and it gives you that something in common…I'm more likely to look at the cyclists a bit more than the pedestrians I think'

'It can be really nice [saying good morning] you don't get it as much with pedestrians it's usually cyclists that say hi, it's almost like you're part of the cycling group, a cycling family, so that's quite nice'

*'Yeah, like if you see a guy or a woman fully Lycra-d up and you're fully Lycra-d up there's generally like a kind of 'hey, we're **part of the same gang**' or whatever, community. But not so much with a mountain bike and me in my cycling gear, or a commuter, just mostly between people who have a smart bike and the gear, there seems to be that little bit of acknowledgement …like I'll say hello or nod or wave or whatever'*

'...she was doing her thing and wobbling around a bit, I see this cyclist coming and he's got a half decent bike he's got panniers, he looks like he knows what he's doing… we're all ok here so I could overtake'

There were also participants who identified as a cyclist but specifically disassociated themselves with a particular type of cyclist perceived negatively as…

'Some cyclists go hell for leather in Lycra'

'Lycra types that go too fast'

'Cyclist Lycra louts'

- Christmas *et al*. (2010) and Aldred (2012)
- Cyclists with negative attitudes towards particular cycling equipment
- Concern of being perceived as '*too competent*' or as a '*serious cyclist*'

Pedestrians on the verge...

'I walk on the verge quite a lot and stay out of the way'

'I look behind me to check for cyclists before going out there, and if there had been a cyclist coming behind me I probably would have stepped on to the verge and walked around the person that way instead of walking out into the path'

'If there isn't a bit of grass to step out on you have to go around the outside [towards the middle of the path] *and that always makes me slightly nervous ... if I think it's safe to squeeze past then I do, I squeeze past in order to leave a channel on the outside and then you think, do they feel like I'm invading their personal space? I could be walking right over there but I'm not I'm squeezing past…but I'm afraid that's what I do to stay out of the way of cyclists'*

Territory

- Goffman's (1972) concept of territory
- 'personal space' – the space surrounding an individual that makes them feel uncomfortable if encroached upon
- 'use space' - the space surrounding an individual which they claim due to 'apparent instrumental needs'

- Identification of in-groups based on mode – for cyclists
- Cyclists developing different transport identities - impacting on interactions
- No pedestrians showed the presence of a transport identity
- Pedestrians lacking a sense of territory and space ownership on the path

Findings

1. How path users share space and the types of interactions that occur
2. The differences in walking and cycling experiences and the impact on interactions
3. Expectations and attitudes towards the path

2. Mobile Experiences

- Differences in the prominence of certain mobile sensory experiences had by cyclists and pedestrians
- Pedestrians discussed the visual mobile experience
- Cyclists had more to say about the physical and embodied aspects of movement

'Flowing feeling'

'I love just like looking down at my legs and just seeing them pumping like pistons in a car or an engine...here I was conscious of whether my legs are going around fast enough, could they be going around just as fast but in a harder gear'

'I make sure I use my legs and not my breath, that's when I realised I could be a lot more efficient, by focusing my mind on the movement of my legs... I try to maintain an even level of breathing and make sure that my body's energy is going more into my legs'

'So here yeah I don't normally like to get this close to people, but because I'm going uphill I didn't want to break my pace too much here because it's really hard to get going'

'I'm thinking look, I'm working pretty hard here and I'm going quite fast, I don't want to have to lose my momentum, you two are cycling two abreast and I don't want to have to slow down for you…so I got up behind him and told him to get out of the way…'

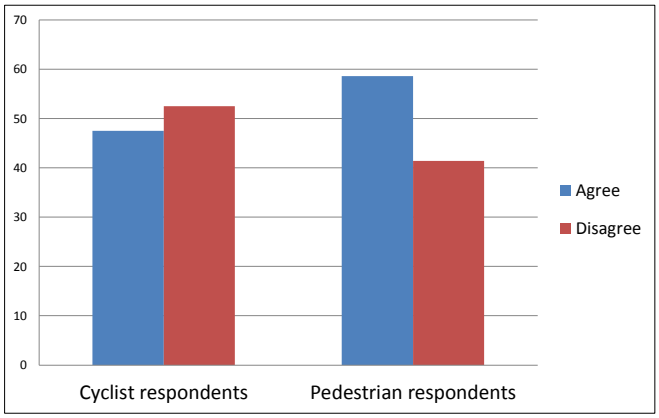
Walking

- Visual senses more prominent in the pedestrians' discussions of their journeys
- Their slower pace allows for a more heightened awareness of the visual senses

'Every time they cut down a tree we notice and then we moan about it going…you do notice how things change, like they've recently cut down some trees and you're like, oh why?'

'Now, ah, there was a reason I stopped there... there's a patch of clovers there and in the past I've found four leaf clovers…I definitely keep a look out, all along the path…it does enhance it [the journey] definitely'

- 53% agreed that 'I get lost in my thoughts'
- Pedestrians more likely to get lost in their thoughts



'Pedestrians need to be more aware and not move sideways suddenly'

'Pedestrians are often not aware of cyclists, but I don't feel this is deliberate'

'I find pedestrians are quite often oblivious - I use my bell to warn people but signs would be helpful'

- Differences in the prominence and importance of particular sensory and embodied experiences
- Impacts on how cyclists and pedestrians share space
- An important consideration for: shared-use path guidance, promotion of walking and cycling, promotion of shared-use paths

Findings

1. How path users share space and the types of interactions that occur
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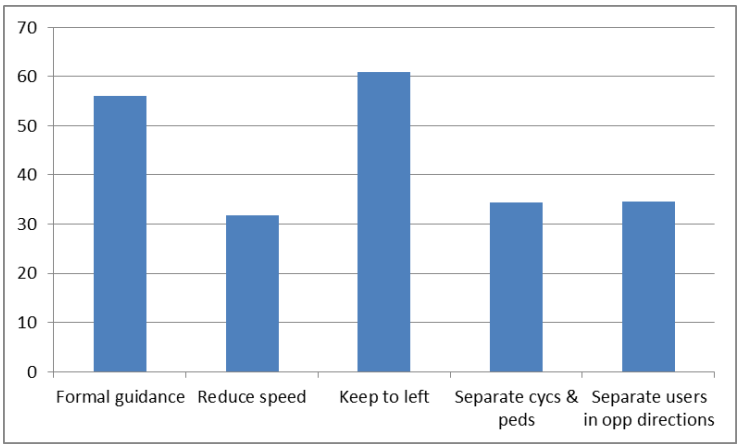
3. Path Improvements

What would make sharing this path more enjoyable?



Path Identity

- Path users do not appear to share one common identification of the path and its associated norms of behaviour
- They have not developed a set of expectations of use that are distinctly associated with shared-use paths
- To make sense of the space they automatically refer to their expectations of the road or pavement as a reference point

Path Identity

Referencing the road

*'Yeah I'm just thinking, you're in the middle and you shouldn't be, if you're going to cycle two a breast you should cycle closer together…it's not responsible **road use**'*

*'There's a tunnel near the end of the path where it actually becomes like a pavement so all of the cyclists stay on the **road** bit and mostly pedestrians stay on the **pavement** bit'*

Path Identity

Terminology

• Specifically referred to cyclists on the path as one would to motor traffic on the road

• Cyclists often described as 'bikes' - similar to when car drivers are referred to as 'cars'

• Pedestrians more often described as 'people' walking

*'There's no doubt that the **bikes** dominate that path, I mean that's what I feel, I don't know what **people who are walking** feel, but there are more bikes'*

Path Identity

Stereotypes

- To make sense of and describe cyclists on the path the respondents transferred stereotypes of motorists to cyclists

*'It's an aggressive style of bike riding that I think is a bit like **boy racers** behind the wheel in cars'*

*'They are a certain type of **macho** man…some male cyclists have that same mentality of the bad car drivers - it's my space get out of my way'*

Path Identity

Path name

- Lack of clarity about the path name
- Differing interpretations of the name of the path:
  - impact on path use
  - impact on expectations of other path users
- Specific to the case study path but a useful learning point for the development of new paths and promotion of existing paths

Path Identity

Path name

*'I would definitely go faster on the shared bit but that's because it's more of a **dedicated cycle path**…at least half the people are going at a relative speed, you know 15m/h or something and I think that's right for a **cycle path**'*

*'…you've got people who just take up loads of space and you're like 'come on **you know it's a cycle track**' I'm ringing my bell and they're not moving and that does frustrate me'*

Path Identity

Which Side?

- Confusion over which side of the path is considered best to walk/cycle on
- Contrasting views about what is accepted as the most appropriate norms of behaviour
- All users should keep left vs pedestrians stay to the right (Highway Code)
- Without any clear guidance on this there is confusion and tension between path users

Path Identity

Which Side?

'There was this guy and I could see him coming up on the right and everyone was going around him, he was not moving out of the way for anybody. So when I got up to him [cycling] I moved closely around him and didn't give him as much room as I could have, to kind of prove a point you know, I moved around him as much as I needed to and then pulled right back in'

- Contrasting interpretations of the path and it's use impacts on sharing practices
- Careful consideration of terminology used in promotion, guidance and information about shared-use paths
- To distinguish shared-use paths and path users as distinct from the road and its users
- Code of conduct: to encourage the development of a standard set of path expectations and norms

Conclusions

- The user-perspective gives a greater insight into the types of interactions, social processes, sharing practices and behaviours that take place between shared-path users
- The importance cyclists and pedestrians put on certain aspects of the sensory and embodied mobile experience and the impact of this on sharing practices
- Inform: future health promotion in terms of active travel, future policy and planning in terms of shared-use paths

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Delaney, H., Parkhurst, G. and Melia, S. (2016) Walking and cycling on shared-use paths: the user perspective. *Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers Municipal Engineer*

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