



ARTICLE FROM THE BOOK:

Cyclists & Cycling Around the World – Creating Liveable and Bikeable Cities

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Published by Fondo Editorial, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, 2013

ISBN: 978-612-4146-55-8

1. Cycle Culture

This chapter covers various stages in the development of an urban cycling culture around the world. You can read four examples of good practice, written to inspire cities which are keen to start, revive or develop further a cycle culture or cities which have the potential to use the bike as a way out of poverty and as a means towards gender equality.

In his article ***How to get started***, Carlos Felipe Pardo offers ten rules that have increased cycling in Bogotá and other cities. It is an inspiring formula as to how you can contribute to the development of a growing urban cycle culture by acting as a pioneer and role model and by participating in groups that promote cycling. The rules are very concrete and down to earth, starting with how important it is that those engaged in promoting cycling as a mean of transport buy a proper bicycle designed for city use. The author adopts a hands-on approach, emphasising the need to know the infrastructure as well as stressing the need to create alliances with the media and policymakers and to work cooperatively between groups that promote cycling; and by the way, “Do not forget having fun while promoting cycling.” These rules have been effective in creating a strong agenda for cycling in Bogotá.

In other cities, for example in China, the challenge lies in saving a cycle culture which is about to disappear. In his article ***Revitalisation of a cycle culture***, Bram van Ooijen describes how this decline was arrested in the city of Guangzhou. During the preparation of the Asian Games in 2010, Guangzhou invested heavily in improving its infrastructure. Two projects especially greatly improved cycling conditions. The local authority created a large network of greenways within the city and as links to other cities, as well as creating a public bike system integrated with the public transport and safe parking. This has affected the local economy very positively in many instances, as the quotation from a local farmer explains how his own life style and those of his friends have changed as a result of the rebirth of cycling in the area. The pilot project in Guangzhou has provided valuable experience which can be used in other cities in China, as well as keeping alive the hope of maintaining a Chinese cycle culture.

Cities which already have a well developed cycle culture can draw inspiration from the article ***Further development of cycle culture***, in which Ria Hilhorst tells the story of how

Amsterdam became a real cycling capital and how the city continues to pave the way for cyclists. Amsterdam has a long history of cycling and has totally integrated cycling into its everyday life. There are a number of reasons for this, ranging from the scale and the topography of the city – the flat landscape and the narrow streets - to the resistance of the local population to making the city more car-friendly. Since the 70s, Amsterdam has had a strong political commitment and massive popular support for the promotion of their cycle culture. The author recounts how the city has reached the point at which the bicycle is regarded as an important part of the integrated transport system. She also writes about the need to continue encouraging the use of the bicycle and for ongoing investment in a mature cycle structure as well as the need to train children to use their bikes as much as, if not more than, the present generation.

A completely different type of challenge to the development of a cycle culture is to be found in cities in India for example, where the poorer sections of the population, especially women, have very restricted access to mobility. In her article, the **Socio-economic impact of the cycle** Anvita Arora offers a gendered social perspective of cycling in India. She explores the significance of the bicycle not only as a means of transport but also as a means of livelihood for a large segment of the population who are being enabled to climb slowly out of poverty through acquiring bicycles. There are many reasons why only few women cycle in the larger Indian cities. Among other reasons, there is a very hostile street environment with insufficient space and insecurity for the women and a culture of abuse towards women cycling. A survey shows the significance cycles can have in the economy of poor women and in gender equality. The bicycle has empowered them with increased mobility and income as well as offering better status in the families and in the community.