Bremen: Cycling City or Car City?

Objective and Subjective Safety in Contested Spaces

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smallest federal state
“Bremen ist eine Autostadt - Bremen is a Car City”

- Jens Böhrnsen, Mayor and Prime Minister of Bremen.

- Mercedes Benz in Bremen: 12,700 employees
- Borgward employed 18,000 workers in 1960
Modal Split in Bremen 2008

Pedestrians / Public Transport / Cars / Bicycle

Quelle: TU Dresden, Verkehrs- und Infrastrukturplanung Mobilität in Städten - SrV 2008
Bicycle Modal Share in German Cities
(with over 500,000 Inhabitants 2008)

Bremen: 25%

Dresden 16%
Leipzig 14%
Berlin 13%
Frankfurt/Main 13%
Düsseldorf 11%

- Source: TU Dresden 2008
Cycle Paths: A Bremen History

1897: First Cycle Paths (leisure routes for middle classes)
1931: 37.4 km
1937: 141 km
1958: 280 km (50% along main roads)
1980: 650 km
2014: > 700 km
Cycle Paths: Policy History

1973: Mozarttrasse-Conflict
1978: Kommunales Fahrrad (Klaus Hinte)
1979: ADFC founded in Bremen
1980: 1st International Velo-City-Conference
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The 1980s concept - reallocate space

Klaus Hinte’s Contrescarpe
Activists in the 70s and 80s
(Konrad Zaiss and the ADFC)

Campaigned for:

- Cycle Paths on every main road
- All One Way Roads with Contra Flow
- Cycle Parking according to Demand
Das Viertel

Sielwall 1972

Sielwall 1981
Das Viertel

Sielwall 1981

Sielwall 1986
Bremen Cycling History

Cycling Modal Share

1937: 23.5%
1961: 10.7%
1970: 5.3%
1980: 19%

But for 25 years hardly any change:
1992: 22%
2002: 22%
2014: 25%
The 1990s
ADFC's New Agenda

“At junctions cyclists are considerably safer on the road or (...) on cycle lanes than on a cycleway. (...) The proportion of junction accidents is significantly higher on roads with cycleways than on those without.”

- 1992: „Schnüll-Study“ On the behaviour of cyclists continuing straight ahead on major urban roads
Conclusions

Schnüll:

Increase Safety at Junctions e.g.:
Raise cycle paths at junctions without traffic lights
At junctions lead cyclists close to traffic, onto the road or on cycle lanes

ADFC:

Cyclepaths are objectively dangerous
1997: Successful Appeal to German Supreme Court to get rid of mandatory use of cycle paths
Objective vs. Subjective Safety

Objective Safety: measured by numbers of accidents or incidents, „Crash risk“
Subjective Safety: perceived safety by cyclists

“In Germany, 96% of cyclists stay on cycle paths even if they are not mandatory. The remaining 4% are overwhelmingly men between 18 and 44 years”

- Bundesanstalt für Straßenwesen 2009, p. 34
Objective Safety & Vehicular Cycling

- John Forester, British-US Traffic Engineer (*1929) developed Concept of Vehicular Cycling:
  “Effective Cycling educational program”:
  - “Cyclists fare best when they act as, and are treated as, operators of vehicles.”
- Prevented Cycling Infrastructure in the USA
Response by Senator, ADFC, Car Club, Police

(hard measures)
Humboldtstraße
1983 and 2013 before "Cycle Street"
Humboldtstraße
2013 before “Cycle Street”
Humboldtstraße

Before: Pavement with Cycle Path

After: Wider Pavement, no Cycle Path
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Humboldtstraße

Road width before

Road width after
22% of all cyclists stay on widened Pavement

- TAZ 25/08/2014
Bremen

- 99% of all Cyclists stay on Cycle Paths even if they are not mandatory

- VEP, Bremen Local Transport Plan Study 2012
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Response by Senator, ADFC, Car Club, Police

(soft measures)

"You are allowed to ride on the road"
“Traffic studies show that cycling on the road is in most cases safer than on the cycle path because motorists and cyclists see each other much better on a joint road; that improves safety.”
New Studies 1

- 32% of all motorists do not look over their shoulder before turning right (p.30)
- Another 28% look but still turn right, ignoring the cyclist’s priority (p. 30)
- 91% of motorists cause the accidents (p.65)
- 95% of motorists make mistakes when turning (p.66)

But only

- 7% of cyclists jump red lights (p. 29)
- 4% of cyclists cycle on the wrong side (p. 29)

- “Accidents with right-turning cars/lorries and cyclists”
  Union of the German Insurance Companies 2013
New Studies 2

- 63% less rear-end crashes car:bike due to traffic separation (by tracks) (p. 9).
- 10% more crashes and injuries after construction of bicycle tracks and lanes (p. 14)

Due to cycle tracks:

- 20% more bicycle traffic mileage
- 10% less motor vehicle traffic mileage (p. 12)

- “Bicycle Tracks and Lanes: A Before-After Study”
  Søren Underlien Jensen, Copenhagen 2007
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