



Cycling on Copenhagens super cycle tracks – the experience and culture of cycle mobility

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Outline

- Introduction
- Theoretical framing – Cycle experiences in the context of cycle cultures and urban places
- Cycle mobility on Copenhagen super cycle tracks
- Concluding





Introduction

- Pocacito – post-carbon cities: Cph and Malmö
- Costs of transport rising in urban areas – affecting social and environmental inequality
 - Transport extremely hard to control
 - Many cities increase attention to cycling
- Cycling as mobility – policy and practice – embeds key trends in present society – and affects those who cycle and their being-in-the-world in particular ways





Introduction

- Thus cycling cities target new groups of cyclists → super cycle highways
- RQ:
 - How do people *do* commute cycling – and why do they choose to cycle in particular ways?
 - Why can specific cycle initiative such as super cycle tracks promote cycle mobility in urban areas?
 - How do these initiatives affect cycle mobility?



Theoretical framing – cycle experience

- Cycle experience (Degen, 2010; Massumi, 2002; Thrift, 2004)
 - Sense scapes – the sound, smell, vision, tactile fabric of cycling on super cycle tracks
 - Emotional/affect – feelings, atmospheres, social interaction, memories
 - Embodied – corporal and becoming
 - Are ephemeral but also entrenched in mobile spaces, contingent and becoming, non-representational responses in the interaction with the world
- Takes place in situated mobile spaces of the city
 - Infrastructures – SUPER CYCLE TRACKS – with particular meanings and embedded in particular policies
- Never in a void – embedded in the cycle cultures of the city





Theoretical framing – cycle culture



- **Cycle cultures** (Jensen, 2010; Vaninni, 2010; Sheller, 2012; Schwanen et al, 2012; Aldred, 2010)
 - Identity – related to specific mobility practices, capacities
 - Mobility habits
 - Codes and knowledges of cycling, shared perceptions
 - Social relations – of cyclists; on the track
 - Spatialised in material structures
- Cycle cultures positioned in daily urban life
 - Cycle stories and histories





Methods

- Qualitative interviews
 - Who: Companies in city centre & commuting cyclists handed flyers
 - Experience: Sensescapes, emotions, body responses, events
 - Cultures: History, stories, position in daily life, family and peers, identification,
 - Perception: Meaning, motivation, identity, Copenhagen
- Videos by participants (on-going)
 - Capture non-representational aspects
 - Commented
- Participants observations and auto-ethnographies
 - Cycling along as regular commuter – own body, experiences and emotions
 - Systematised observations – fellow cyclists' way of cycling, social encounters, equipment, speed,



Theoretical framing

- Why people cycle and how super cycle tracks affect cycle mobility and urban spaces investigated in the nexus between **cycle experience** and **cycle cultures** in the context of particular **mobile spaces** of the city
- Investigated qualitatively
 - In-depth interviews, video recordings, ethnographic observations



Commute cycling in Cph

- Cph cycle mobility and the policy of super cycle tracks
 - Urban mobility policy and the urban strategy Eco-Metropolis objective of 50 per cent urban travels on cycle and post-carbon city
- The Farum track
 - 2nd super cycle track – follows the motorway but in separated system
 - Extending existing cycle infrastructure, adding airpumps, foot rests, removing obstacles...
 - Connecting via green spaces and residential areas to suburbs to the North
 - Connetcs to increasing health awareness and interest in active life styles





Experiences of cycle commutes on the Farum track

- The Farum route frames commute cycling
 - Alternative to car queues and uncertain train services
 - Dependent on access to shower, safe parking, at work
 - For many the earlier departure must fit social life, for others they develop coping strategies to maintain this





Experiences of cycle commutes on the Farum track

- The environment of the route matters
 - The tunnels and lack of light stirs fear of attacks/tripping
 - Night time insecure – people bundle on the widest track side
 - ‘ I never ever would cycle when its dark – that’s why I don’t cycle in the winter, I don’t mind the cold at all...but when it’s dark, the boogieman is waiting for me in the tunnels, you know, by the moor – and someone was raped there last spring...but when I cycle with Michael, its ok, even though he says he’s the hugest chicken..haha..’ (Josephine, mid 40s, cycles 2-3 times a week)
 - The social housing intimidating
 - The uninterrupted flow and the green of e.g. the lake areas almost meditative: problem solving, leaving work – the transformation or tackle challenges
 - Contact with natural shifts – the changing smells and colours
 - Major shift when the track enters the build environment



Cycle cultures of commute cycling on the Farum track

- Identity

- Multiple ways of being a commute cyclist....

- ‘I like to do the long cycle trips, always have...and cycle with speed, its my way of moving – but I am NOT a lycra with all the smart gadgets and all...’ (Benn, in 50s, cycles every day)

- Significant for self-perception

- Reflects often long time experiences



SUPERBICYCLE
GIFT GUIDE:
THE URBAN CYCLIST



1. Cadenet, 2. New, 3. ... 14. ...





Cycle cultures of commute cycling on the Farum track

- Active lifestyles

- The distance provide a sports element that you share with fellow cyclists competing with strangers and your self
- The body responds – the feeling of getting fit
- Is active involvement with the environment of the route – the green spaces significant
- Weather doesn't stop me...
- For cyclists is intertwined with how they are with family and friends





Cycle cultures of commute cycling on the Farum track

- Recognise the speed and local traffic codes – becomes a rhythm for the commuters
 - Changes when ‘ordinary’ cyclists enter the route in the city
- Social relations amiable
 - part of the family stories, something you share with colleagues, friends, neighbours
 - links to cycling as family activity and normalised short-trip daily transport
 - But challenged by those who do not follow the codes or threatening outsiders (e.g. intimidating youths of the social housing, the attackers at night)





Concluding

- Connectivity and flow, changing sensescapes and atmospheres make commute cycling a fellowship as well as very individualised, corporal experience
 - intensive sensuous and emotional experience that become habitualized
 - Fear and joy strong
 - Physical challenges nited
- Fits the active life styles and connects to many ways of being a cyclist – to cycle histories and to daily lives
 - Multi funcitonal for many



Thank you for your attention!

