

Cycling that makes sense - A qualitative exploration of cyclists' perception of bike infrastructure

Pontus Wallgren and Cedrik Sjöblom

Keywords: Cycling safety, Nudging, Bicycle infrastructure

Bike infrastructure is in most cities a fairly recent addition and something that has, in many cases, been squeezed in where space has been available. Consequently, the properties of bike lanes differ a lot between different locations. An observation that is easy to make is that when bike lanes are wide, smooth, and straight, the variation in bicyclists' behaviour is low. When on the other hand there are lanes that disappear, that takes long detours, or are blocked for various reasons, bicyclists start to act in a way that from an outsider's perspective may look random or at least difficult to predict. This paper reports on a study where 20 bicyclists have filmed their daily commute with GPS equipped action cameras. They then have looked at the film together with a researcher and explained how they perceive the route and how they make their choices in traffic. Based on the results of the study we argue that the bicyclists' behaviour is very rational from the perspective of the bicyclist's perceived action space, and that by understanding how different people interpret the bicycle infrastructure we can make small design changes that have less ambiguity and nudges bicyclists towards a more uniform and safe behaviour.