

## ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORAL PREFERENCES OF BICYCLISTS IN URBAN AREAS A THREE CONTINENT COMPARISON

*Salvatore Cafiso, Nikiforos Stamatiadis, Giuseppina Pappalardo, Carmelo D'Agostino, Mariusz Kiec and Khashayar Kazemzadeh*

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### Background

Over the past 40 years, the number of people using bicycles as their primary means of transportation has increased significantly. Transportation agencies around the world promote bicycling as a way to reduce pollution and traffic congestion. However, lack of bicycling infrastructure in many cities could significantly impede the future growth of bicycle usage.

### Aim

This paper used a web survey to evaluate attitudes and preferences of bicyclists in four cities from different countries: Italy, Poland, USA, and Iran. The goal of the survey was to document and compare the impediments to bicycling in urban areas related to infrastructures and context related factors ranked in order of importance from perspective of users in four different countries.

### Method or methodological issues

Data were collected with a common web-based survey translated in each national language to solicit responses about bicyclist attitudes and opinions about impediments to bicycling. Preliminary analysis of attitudes to bicycling and personal characteristics, revealed a no uniform distribution of participants from different countries. Therefore, in order to cluster the participants in homogeneous groups in terms of attitudes and characteristics Principal Components Analysis and K-means clustering were used to quantify the cycling attitudes and classify the 758 international participants. Homogenous groups were then used for analyzing participant responses and their level of agreement.

### Results obtained or expected

Factors such as presence of bicycle infrastructure, in the form of bicycle lanes, paths, or cycle tracks, and pavement conditions, have been identified as the most important features that could encourage bicycling. While the survey findings lend support to the idea that bicyclists around the world harbor similar attitudes about what improvements are needed to increase cycling and enhance their experiences, local conditions and practices also influence perceptions about the relevance of specific issue.

### Conclusion

In the current economic environment there is less money to fund infrastructure, and transportation agencies with shrinking budgets are challenged to justify all investments, especially those designed to increase bicycling as transportation mode. In this framework, the perception of the infrastructure conditions and bicyclists opinion seems to be vital to guide agencies efforts to prioritize investments.