

Can road safety policy escape the automobility norm in transport policy and facilitate cycling instead? The cases of the Sweden and the Netherlands

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Road safety policy rules us in both invisible and visible ways, and prioritising one mode necessarily means downgrading another. It is argued in previous research that road safety policy induces automobility and speed and problematises cycling as unsafe. From this, it might be concluded that road policy upholds the automobility norm in transport policy. At the same time, there are countries where a culture of velomobility manages to exist next to a culture of automobility, such as the Netherlands. This raises two questions. First, how are problems in general and those related to cycling safety represented in road safety policy? And secondly, how does problematising road safety reflect a cultural context? This paper tries to answer these questions by performing a cross-national comparison between policies in the Netherlands and Sweden, using Bacchi's approach to policy analysis as a theoretical inspiration and method. The analysis shows that a concern for other goals besides safety and a different problematisation of cycling safety both make a substantial difference in the ability to support cycling.