



Lifestyles and Cycling

More and more people are cycling in Germany. In the city of Rostock, for example, even without a large infrastructure expansion, cycling levels increased from 12% in 2003 to 21% in 2008.

Bicycle use partly differs greatly for each region, borough, and social group. In the German city of Cologne, for example, cycling levels in the borough of Ehrenfeld are higher than in the borough of Kalk. 24% of the trips are made by bicycle in Ehrenfeld and only 8% in Kalk (average in the city of Cologne is 12%). Interestingly, both boroughs are similar in structure in terms of their location within the city and both are former working-class neighbourhoods. If this is a general trend, does it not occur everywhere to the same extent?

To better understand cyclists, it is thus helpful to make a detailed analysis of their travel behaviour: Who travels why, and where and how often do people travel by bike. In order to motivate more people to cycle, it is important to understand why some people cycle and others not.

A more detailed analysis of the bicycle use reveals differences according to age, gender, income, residential environment, ethnic background, values and attitudes, as well as aesthetic preferences and other factors. Based upon these characteristics, people can be classified into 'milieus' sharing the same lifestyle and mobility style. Trips too can be grouped into different purposes, such as day-to-day work or education trips, leisure and holiday trips.

People can better be reached through targeted marketing measures or other cycling-promotion measures that consider their attitudes and tastes rather than being based upon demographics such as age, income or place of residence.

However, it is important to note that there is no intrinsic correlation between cycling per se and any particular lifestyle. In Germany, for example, 83% of all households own at least one bicycle; a whopping 96% of households with children have a bicycle. A third of Germany's population cycles frequently. Cycling is, thus, not a niche topic.

Age and bicycle use

Age is often a category used in many mobility surveys. It includes basic stages in life (such as education and training – professional life – retirement) that have a

Cover images: Different lifestyles all make use of the bike to get around. © bicy.it

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bearing on the potential for cycling, as well as for physical fitness. In addition, peer groups, i.e. members of a group who are of equal status and who influence each other's behaviour, are often of the same age group.



Cycling at a young age can have a lifetime benefit. © bicy.it

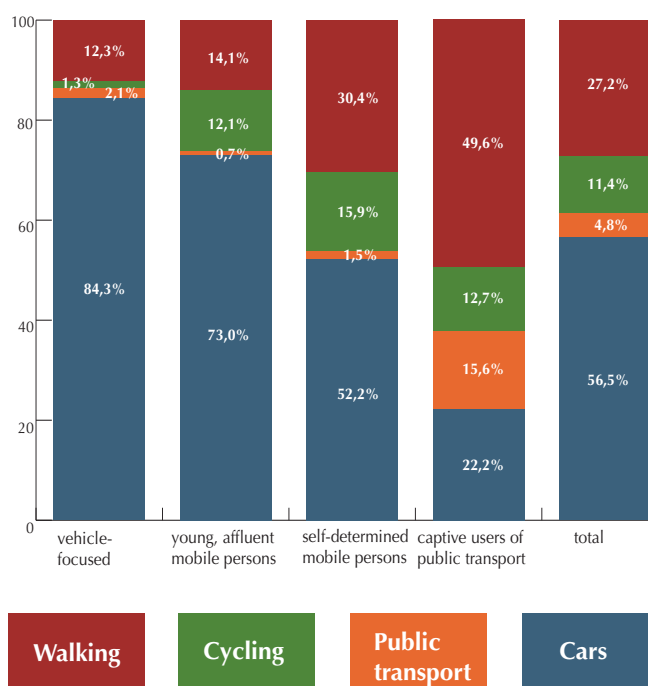
Since 2000, especially single young adults without children have been cycling more compared to the 1990s. The use of public transport has also increased. The reasons for this are, in part, altered life stages, and in part behavioural change. More young people live in cities; fewer of them are in paid employment; and more young adults have a higher education. They tend to use other means of transport than the car.

Car use is still increasing among older persons because nowadays, unlike in the past, more and more older women drive cars. But cars no longer play such a significant role for young people's social life, because they can easily use other means of transport to get from one place to another. For example, low-budget airlines fly to various holiday destinations; online social networks and mobile phones enable people, in part, to stay in touch and maintain their friendships online. In addition, along with cars, the role of new status symbols such as multimedia gadgets has increased. Even though many people buy a car when they start a family of their own, it is fair to say that young people who, prior to becoming parents, relied on the most economic means of transport are found to be more flexible in their choice of transport mode also in older age than previous generations that only relied on cars. This multimodal travel behaviour is becoming more and more prevalent among the younger generations.

Example: Mobility Styles of Older Persons in NRW

In North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW), Germany, the Research Institute for Regional and Urban Development (ILS) has conducted a study on the mobility behaviour and mobility attitudes of older persons. The study combines the classification based upon mobility behaviour and attitudes. It identified four different segments:

- Persons 'reliant on cars' ('Pkw-Fixierte') have the most physical handicaps; they tend to be older, single, less well-off, less educated, and less active and mainly tend to use the car.
- Almost all persons with a 'young affluent, mobile lifestyle' ('Junge wohlhabende Mobile') have a car, a mobile phone and an Internet connection. They have an above-average level of education and income and a high need for mobility. Persons with a 'young affluent, mobile lifestyle' tend to live in suburbia, where their access to public transport is limited. 70% of them make 10% of their trips by bike.
- Persons with 'self-determined mobility' ('Selbstbestimmt Mobile') are similar to the former group, except with a lower need for mobility.



Choice of transport for shopping trips for the elderly grouped according to styles of mobility. (Source: Hausteijn/Stiewe, ILS 2010)

Sources

Sinus-Institut (2011): Fahrradmonitor Deutschland (/edoc.difu.de/edoc.php?id=E124SHZD) (German)

Cycle Friends Project in the Netherlands (www.nrvp.de/en/praxisbeispiele/anzeige.phtml?id=2134)

Umweltbundesamt (2009): Environmental Awareness and Environmental Behaviour of Social Milieus in Germany (Umweltbewusstsein und Umweltverhalten der sozialen Milieus in Deutschland) (www.umweltdaten.de/publikationen/fpdf-l/3871.pdf) (German)

They have good access to cars and public transport and generally have the most positive attitude toward cycling and walking. Bicycle use is found to be higher in this segment. They are generally the most satisfied with their mobility options.

- Persons 'reliant on public transport' ('ÖV-Zwangsnutzer/innen') seldom have a car and only a third of them has a driving licence. 83% of them are women. They tend to be older, less active and more often have disabilities. They are less educated, have a lower income, and usually live close to the city/town centre with good access to public transport. They are well acquainted with the public transport and generally satisfied with it.

The milieu-sensitive promotion of cycling can either serve to reinforce a trend and support people with a propensity to cycle or target people who do not use their bicycle often.

Milieu and bicycle use

The Fahrrad-Monitor Deutschland 2011 (Bicycle Monitor Germany 2011), a study conducted by the Sinus Institute, classifies people into 'milieus' based upon their attitudes, backgrounds, aesthetic preferences, and residential environments in order to analyse groups of like-minded people. The study found that people in the vibrant, younger, modern milieus cycle daily or several times a week. 50% in the 'high achiever milieu', 46% in the 'escapist milieu', and 49% in the 'movers and shakers milieu' cycle frequently.

There is no correlation between high status and regular cycle use: the 'escapists' tend to be more resource-poor; the 'movers and shakers' belong to the middle class, and the 'high achievers' to the upper class. The number of people travelling by bike several times a week is especially low among the 'precarious', the 'new middle class', and the 'adaptive pragmatists'; whereas among the 'traditional milieu', the 'socio-ecological milieu', and the 'liberal intellectual milieu' there are on average more people making several trips per week by bike. The percentage of people who generally consider cycling in their travel options is, however, much higher among the high-status milieus ('established conservative milieu', 'liberal intellectual milieu', 'high achiever milieu', and 'movers and shakers milieu'). In rural areas, cycle use is above average especially in the 'new middle class milieu'.

Socio-economic factors and bicycle use

In the 'precarious milieu', the use of any mode of transport is below average (car and cycle use, and walking) or on average at the most (local public transport). Despite the fact that the bicycle is a rather cheap means of transport, cycle use is not higher among resource-poor segments of the population. These segments of society also often have health problems. In addition, access to public transport and the cycle route network is sometimes poor in areas that are covered by the German urban development programme Soziale Stadt ('Socially Integrative City'; 'areas with special development needs' or, less formal, 'socially deprived areas').

According to the study Mobility in Germany 2008 (MiD 2008), especially people from the second lowest income quintile (13%) use the bicycle as their main mode of transport. For all other income groups, the percentage of those who make most of their trips by bike is between 8 and 10%. People from affluent households tend to use the bicycle the least.

Example: 'Cycle Friends' in the Netherlands

Studies have shown that cycle use is especially low among migrant women. Among other reasons, this is partly due to the fact that they have never learnt how to cycle and partly because their clothing does not seem compatible with cycling. To address this issue, there are cycle-training courses especially aimed at migrant women. In the Netherlands the project 'Fietsvriendinnen' ('Cycling Female Friends') has been set up, where experienced female cycling volunteers take migrant women that are new to cycling on cycling trips. The purpose of these trips is to increase the cycling competence of the migrant women and offer the women the opportunity to get to know one another.



Saskia and Khadidja - Two 'Cycle Friends' on a common trip
© Angela Van der Kloof

VCÖ (2009): Social aspects of Mobility (Soziale Aspekte von Mobilität)
(www.vcoe.at/de/publikationen/vcoe-factsheets/details/items/Factsheet2009-02) (German)

More information on lifestyle and cycling can be found in the following editions
CyE A-1 Bicycle Use Trends
CyE A-11 Ageing Society on Bicycles
CyE O-8 Cycling Quality Management and Evaluation in Europe

About niches, trends and distinction

There are many niches focused around cycling, such as initiatives that organise tandem partners for blind people and hand-propelled bicycles for wheelchair users. Some biker scenes cultivate their own style and use bikes increasingly as a means to distinct themselves



*Regular cycle use (daily, several times a week) in different 'Sinus Milieus'.
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from others. People can buy a variety of equipment and accessories to express their sportiness, their bike affinity, and distinguish themselves by wearing special stylish cycling wear. In the ads, bicycle producers highlight the trendy side of the urban and hip lifestyle. Moreover, the number of bicycle trade shows in Germany has increased significantly compared to 20 years ago. In addition, there are a number of cycling blogs and a vivid mountain biker scene on the Internet where aficionados exchange information about tours, performances and di-

ets. Large cities have bike messengers that offer fast delivery of mainly documents and organise bike messenger races. Bike messengers value especially fast, no-frills bikes. There is a scene for 'fixies' (fixed-gear or single-speed bicycles) that are 'stripped', i.e. road bikes without gears, lights and brakes. In the cities, the number of cargo bikes is increasing, and many electric bikes have been sold in the last two to three years. Cycle levels are high especially in trendy gentrified areas of the cities. In Amsterdam, but partly also in Germany, bikes sometimes seem to be objects of devotion and self-stylisation: the city is dotted with many colourfully painted bikes and bikes adorned with flowers.

12 theses about cycling and lifestyle

- Cycling suits some lifestyle more than others.
- Cycling has gained in popularity over the last 20 years.
- Cycling infrastructure has improved over the last 20 years.
- In cities, the car as a status symbol has been replaced mainly by multi-media gadgets.
- There are some popular scenes that define themselves through cycling.
- The market for cycle products has grown.
- In future Pedelegs will play a very important role, at first, mainly among older, affluent people with a positive attitude toward cycling. The increase in cycle use also depends on policies.
- The infrastructure requirements of Pedelegs must be taken into consideration.
- Cycle use among certain cycle-friendly milieus would increase with improved infrastructure.
- Cycle levels are low in segments of the population with poor resources and low mobility.
- Higher cycle use in these segments would have positive effects: improved social participation, improved health, and ecological mobility.
- The lifestyle-specific promotion of cycling is more effective than untargeted cycling-promotion measures because it is able to better address problems specific to certain life stages.



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Zimmerstraße 13–15, 10969 Berlin
Department for Mobility and Infrastructure
Editors: Jörg Thiemann-Linden, Julia Thiele, Irene Müller
cycling-expertise@difu.de