Ageing, mobility, built environment and technologies

Understanding cycling amongst the UK’s older population and how this affects health and wellbeing

Mixed methods research

- Urban designers and architects: ageing | built environment
- Geographers: governance | mobility and affect
- Transport planners: understanding travel behaviour
- Neuropsychologists: physical activity on ageing brain

Cycling across age groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Bicycle share of trips (%)</th>
<th>Source: NTS</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-16</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>17-29</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>30-44</td>
<td>2.46</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>45-59</td>
<td>1.85</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>60-69</td>
<td>1.84</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70+</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-69</td>
<td>0.75</td>
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</table>

Different story elsewhere...

Cycling in later life

- What enables some to continue?
- When and why do others give up?

Cycling is an important method of transport in older age in other parts of Northern Europe.

Share of journeys by people aged 65+

UK 1%
DENMARK 15%
NETHERLANDS 23%
GERMANY 9%
Research questions

How do participants explain how their current cycling status has emerged?
How did cycling evolve in relation to the physical and social settings of their life?
What influence have events and transitions in mid and later life had on their cycling?
How does ageing influence practice and experience of cycling?
What narrative forms emerge in the communication of an older person’s life time experiences of cycling?

Life course perspective

"dynamically as the consequence of past experience and future expectation as well as the integration of internal motive and external constraint" (Giele and Elder, 1998)

Interviews

life history grid
semi-structured interview
Current
Past
Future
Ageing

Life history grid

Participants

Regular, occasional and rare cycling
no longer cycling
Gender balance
50s | 60s | 70+
Index Multiple Deprivation
Spatial context

Data processing and analysis

Biographical interview materials, life grid, notes, recordings
categorise
coding
collections
transcripts
Research questions

"enquiries
Retrieved collection
'clips'
clipping....coding
clipping....coding
Research questions
### TYPOLOGY

#### Reginald - Diminished
- Retired public servant, living inner suburbs
- Cycled intermittently through career
- Failed attempt at cycling for recreation in retirement

> “there has always been a purpose, to get somewhere to do something else...having got the bike to go to school, a bike was then a mode of transport, an efficient and cheap mode of transport which I was happy to go on doing but it wasn’t something that took my interest in its own right.”

> “…then it went in the garage, I used it occasionally, I used to go up to [volunteering], having retired and got time so I did that but anything else local, Tesco’s or to the shops just walk, just once or twice I went out for a cycle ride for exercise, to keep fit because not being on my feet every day, I consciously wanted to keep fit …but me bum hurt...it was so, it was uncomfortable and it was more stressful than walking and trying to find different routes for interest because I didn’t like going there and back again for fun, it’s ok for commuting but if I’m doing something I like to do it in a circle...then I stopped doing that and it’s stopped now for the last couple of years...About a year ago was the last time I used my bicycle...on holiday last year when we hired bikes...”

> “Golf and grandchildren”

#### Angie - Diminished
- Part time self employed, inner suburbs
- In London until age of 40, bike was main mode of transport
- Moved to Bristol and got car, cycles less, drives and walks

> “My cycling life has really shrunk actually, not because I can’t or don’t want to, for some reason, particularly at the moment, because I’m doing a lot of things to do with work I have needed to the car to go and buy stuff!”

> “I used to go on the roads more, I think that I am less confident and I think that’s partly to do with I don’t do it so much, and also an age thing … you feel more vulnerable, you know turning your head to see what’s coming and you use a lot of peripheral vision when your cycling and hearing, those things tend to become a little bit less acute...also to do with moving your head, balance and move, checking to see, and all those things combined they are not quite as good as they were.”

> “I have been thinking it would be nice to have a decent bike, a sort light weight, with lots of gears ... more user friendly thing in terms of hills to do leisure cycling... it would be nice to have one with a motor [laughs]...it seems to be creeping up, that sort of thing”

#### Leona - Restored
- Works full time, lives and works in north fringe
- Moved to Bristol from rural location, occasional leisure cycling
- Initially commuting into city centre, job change

> “as a child fairly level, then a big stop while I was at uni, then started again and then there was another stop and then since I’ve had this new bike it’s probably grown and as I say I probably cycle more now than I ever have done in my life.”

> “it’s very much a fitness thing, cos at work I’m sitting down all day ….it’s only been the last 15 months… I started work there then, it’s a 6/7 mile cycle ride which is actually no further to when I worked in the city centre previously...there is absolutely no way I would have cycled from here into the city...it’s quieter, traffic’s quieter, … and it’s also the attitude of work, if I’m not at my desk until 9.30 it doesn’t matter whereas before I was in financial services and it did ....they have this sustainable travel policy...there are changing facilities, showers...I am a fair-weather cyclist, I must admit, October comes and the bike goes in the shed for winter….some of the ring road path is unlit”

#### Wilfred - Restored
- Retired business owner, living urban fringe
- No time or opportunity while running business
- Sport curtailed by knee
- Wife did long distance charity rides
- Family encouraged him
- Cycles twice a week with wife

> “about 2008 the kids bought me a bike cos [wife] was biking ….I’d already had a half [knee] replacement ...They bought me a bike and I started just doing a little bit of biking cos I was working still, just out with the kids and that...”

> “the bike was bought for you? Yeah just to do something [laughing] encouragement to do something ...as I say I was so embedded in work, my focus was work, building up the business and early retirement”

> “Um probably since I retired, 3 years been doing it all the time, cos I’ve been sporty all my life and competitive, you know if I do something I want to win kind of thing, and of course I couldn’t do nothing, so I started cycling and I didn’t enjoy it greatly to begin with if honest, I’d go out with my wife and thought “aww gawd 12 miles cycle ride yeah I’ll do if it keeps her happy, keep her, you know”. … it’s just cycling’s boring...but then gradually you appreciate what’s around you, the scenery and that and going out and stopping in a cafe...and they’ve stopped now so it’s just Chloe and myself”

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**Development trajectories of later life cycling**

- **Cycling activity**
  - Expanded
  - Continuing
  - Restored
  - Diminished
  - None
  - Curtained

**Time**

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17/02/2016
Later life transitions – opportunities for intervention?

### Developmental type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change in circumstances for cycling</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Distances, topography, infrastructure, safety, aesthetics</td>
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<tr>
<td>Schedule/potential purposes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social support/influence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capacity and comfort</td>
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<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
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### Examples

- Curtailled: Changes in fitness, flexibility, sensory and motor abilities, rehabilitation, management of conditions/aging process
- Diminished: Retirement/down-shift in work
- Restored: Relocation/retirement
- Continuous: Capacity and comfort

### Later life transitions – opportunities for intervention?

### Type of life event/transition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Down-size home down-shift in work</td>
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### Supporting cycling in mid and later life

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Challenges</th>
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<tr>
<td>Temporal opportunities and constraints</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accessing routes for leisure</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ageing bicycles</td>
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<tr>
<td>Company for cycling</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seeing cycling as age appropriate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Changing capability, confidence and motivation changing with onset of health conditions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ageing infrastructure</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ease of local functional journeys</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Travel plan measures targeting later career employees</td>
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<tr>
<td>Retirement preparation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Links to key routes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Loan, pool, etc. for bikes, tax-efficient purchase, trade-in, recycled</td>
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<tr>
<td>Training, groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>Age-inclusive image of cycling</td>
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<tr>
<td>Promote inter-generational aspect</td>
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<tr>
<td>Encouraging patients to resume or initiate active travel as part of recovery/management of condition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Design and maintenance of spaces for cycling</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ease of storage and set off</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ease of arrival and cycle parking</td>
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