

The background of the slide is a photograph of a tram track in a park-like setting. The tracks run down the center of the frame, flanked by green grass and fallen autumn leaves. On the left side of the track, a person is riding a bicycle. On the right side, a group of people is walking. The background is filled with lush green trees under a clear blue sky. The text is overlaid on this image.

Cycling in the eye of the beholder: a guided activity on how place and identity contextualizes our experiences of cycling

CRB Conference Summary
Dr. Rebecca Mayers and Professor Brian Doucet
January 19th, 2023

Purpose



The Activity: Non- Participant Observation



What is non-participant observation?

- Location
- People
- Actions
- Language



Why is non-participant observation beneficial?



Round #1: Cycling Environment

Field Non-Participant Observation Worksheet

(Observer Comment*write subjective observer comments/thoughts in brackets—if you can't see it, OC it!)

Round #1

Date:

Time of day:

Location (colours, sounds, textures, smells, temperature)

People (details of faces, clothing, race, gender, hair colour)

Action (overt-pedestrian stopped for a passing cyclist)

Language (grab any quotes you can, don't make them up if you can't hear it—switch from quotes to general content)

Question 1: *What aspects of cycling do you find most extraordinary or 'typical Dutch' in this location?*

Question 2: *How does this differ from your home town/city/country?*

Question 3: *What factors do you think enable cycling at this location?*

Round #1 Findings

Field Non-Participant Observation Worksheet

(Observer Comment*write subjective observer comments/thoughts in brackets—if you can't see it, OC it!)

Round #1

Date:

Time of day: 13⁴⁰

Location (colours, sounds, textures, smells, temperature)

- red brick paths, bricks - few car noises - relaxed expressions
- tram bells - diverse cyclist - no helmets

People (details of faces, clothing, race, gender, hair colour)

- (tourists wait while an intersection is clear, locals "push through")
- people sit more upright than in other places - transport participants don't stick to designated infrastructure

Action (overt-pedestrian stopped for a passing cyclist)

- cars give way to pedestrians & cyclists (except taxis)
- bike with front rack transporting another person on it (person sits backwards)

Language (grab any quotes you can, don't make them up if you can't hear it—switch from quotes to general content)

- non-verbal negotiations (codes express who's stopping, who's going)

Question 1: What aspects of cycling do you find most extraordinary or 'typical Dutch' in this location?—seeming chaos, but everything works (transport)

- people cycle without helmets
- red brick bike lanes

Question 2: How does this differ from your home town/city/country?

- in other countries more separation/segregation of road users.
- not much interaction & negotiation between trafficants.

Question 3: What factors do you think enable cycling at this location?

- culture (bike not seen as inferior)
- bad conditions for motorists

Round #2: Behaviour

Question 1: *What activities are being prioritized in this space?*

Question 2: *How are people using this space to cycle? (i.e. what infrastructure are they using or not using? Any rules they seem to follow or not?)*

Question 3: *Who seems to be cycling at this location? (i.e. gender, race, ethnicity, socio-economic status)*

Question 4: *Who is NOT cycling at this location? Why or why not?*

Question 5: *Describe the needs that are being met via bike (i.e. what are cyclists carrying? What do you think their intended trip purpose is, if any?)*

Question 6: *What about this space incentivises people to cycle here?*

Question 7: *Is this an equitable cycling environment?*

Round #2 Findings

Question 1: What activities are being prioritized in this space?

1) Leisure/shopping walking 2) through cycling (not much parking or place to stop) 3) (often)

Question 2: How are people using this space to cycle? (i.e. what infrastructure are they using or not using? Any rules they seem to follow or not?)

There / To get from A-B 2) parking 3) without stopping w/ bikes

Question 3: Who seems to be cycling at this location? (i.e. gender, race, ethnicity, socio-economic status)

- carrying stuff
No tourist bikes, ppl are confident (locals?), white, otherwise mixed

Question 4: Who is NOT cycling at this location? Why or why not?

No kids → either alone (as passengers), not many cargo bikes

Question 5: Describe the needs that are being met via bike (i.e. what are cyclists carrying? What do you think their intended trip purpose is, if any?)

carrying goods, deliveries, commercial?

Question 6: What about this space incentivizes people to cycle here?

dedicated, very wide cycle path that connects

Question 7: Is this an equitable cycling environment?

Yes, as equitable

as busy cycle lane can be

- maybe a bit busy for small kids cycling

two busy places

Round #3: Research Question Ideation

Round 3: Create 3 research questions based on your observations from today

*Think about what you've observed, what we discussed, and some underlying questions you have. Remember to think about questions that underscore the experiential nature of cycling and the social cycling environment. Think beyond the infrastructure!

Research Question 1:

Research Question 2:

Research Question 3:

Research Question

How can infrastructure that prioritises cycling also enable safe and equitable experiences for those who do not cycle, or those who do not feel confident in a busy cycling environment?

-The group



Conclusions from our workshop

1. As a group, we learned how our lived experience influences the way we interpret the cycling environment
2. Including multiple perspectives is integral to increasing mode share and enjoyable experiences on bikes (not only the researchers interest)
3. Non-participant observation is a useful tool for brainstorming rigorous research questions

How are we using this work after the conference?

1. Understanding the cycling experience and both hard and soft factors influence it
2. How does social identity influence cycling behaviour?

Everybody Bikes Research Project

Better understand the experiences, behaviours and attitudes towards cycling through the eyes of people who have lived in both the Netherlands and Canada in order to enhance cycling planning and policy for Canadian cities.



Mayers, R. F., & Glover, T. D. (2020). Whose lane is it anyway? The experience of cycling in a mid-sized city. *Leisure Sciences*, 42(5-6), 515-532

Everybody Bikes Research Project

1. **How is cycling behaviour shaped by place?**
2. **How is cycling behaviour shaped across the life course?**
3. **How are intersectional identities expressed and interpreted while cycling?**



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Let's Connect!

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