What can people-centered design contribute to cycling?

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In this research, I explore the potential contribution of people-centered design to growing the practice of cycling. Regional design scholars have noted the power of design in planning (van Dijk, 2011) and how it can “make [people] understand” (Kempenaar et al., 2016). There is also literature that points out the value of and need for design (Jensen et al., 2016; Jensen and Lanng, 2017) and social and experiential (te Brömmelstroet et al., 2017; Forsyth and Krizek, 2011) perspectives in mobility. However, people-centered design’s utility to growing the practice of cycling has not yet been articulated. The rapid increase of cycling with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic also facilitates a need for practical tools for cities to expand safe and comfortable bicycle infrastructure for a wider portion of the population. As COVID-19 affects cities around the world, these tools need to be usable across borders.

Thus, this research uses two pathways to explore the value of people-centered design to cycling: building shared understanding and acceptance of cycling, and the design of infrastructure. It begins by surveying literature to map potential contributions to each pathway. It then translates four design methods to the context of cycling, and asks professionals about their value in a survey. The survey has parts both on conceptual contributions of people-centered design to cycling and on the specific four translated design methods.

The study contributes to the literature on the experiential aspect of cycling. The four translated design methods provide a practical contribution, and the discussion proposes the use a people-centered framework for growing the practice of cycling. I suggest that due to the nature of studying people, this is possible regardless of national or regional context. The research is still in progress- major conclusions are yet to come.

References:


