

# Campaigning for cycling and well-being as resistance to hegemonic economic discourses

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# Increases in everyday cycling

**"policies during the last two decades have largely failed to generate significant increases in everyday cycling** in countries with low to average pedalling levels, whereas in countries with relatively high cycling volumes, such policies have contributed to a consolidation of its existing, relatively high level, rather than to further growth"

"it may be wise to shift the focus in bicycle policies from rational planning to nudging strategies in order to influence through more subtle, socio-psychological and cultural means the engrained habits and attitudes that play such a crucial, but not always clearly visible motivational role in traffic behaviour and mobility patterns"

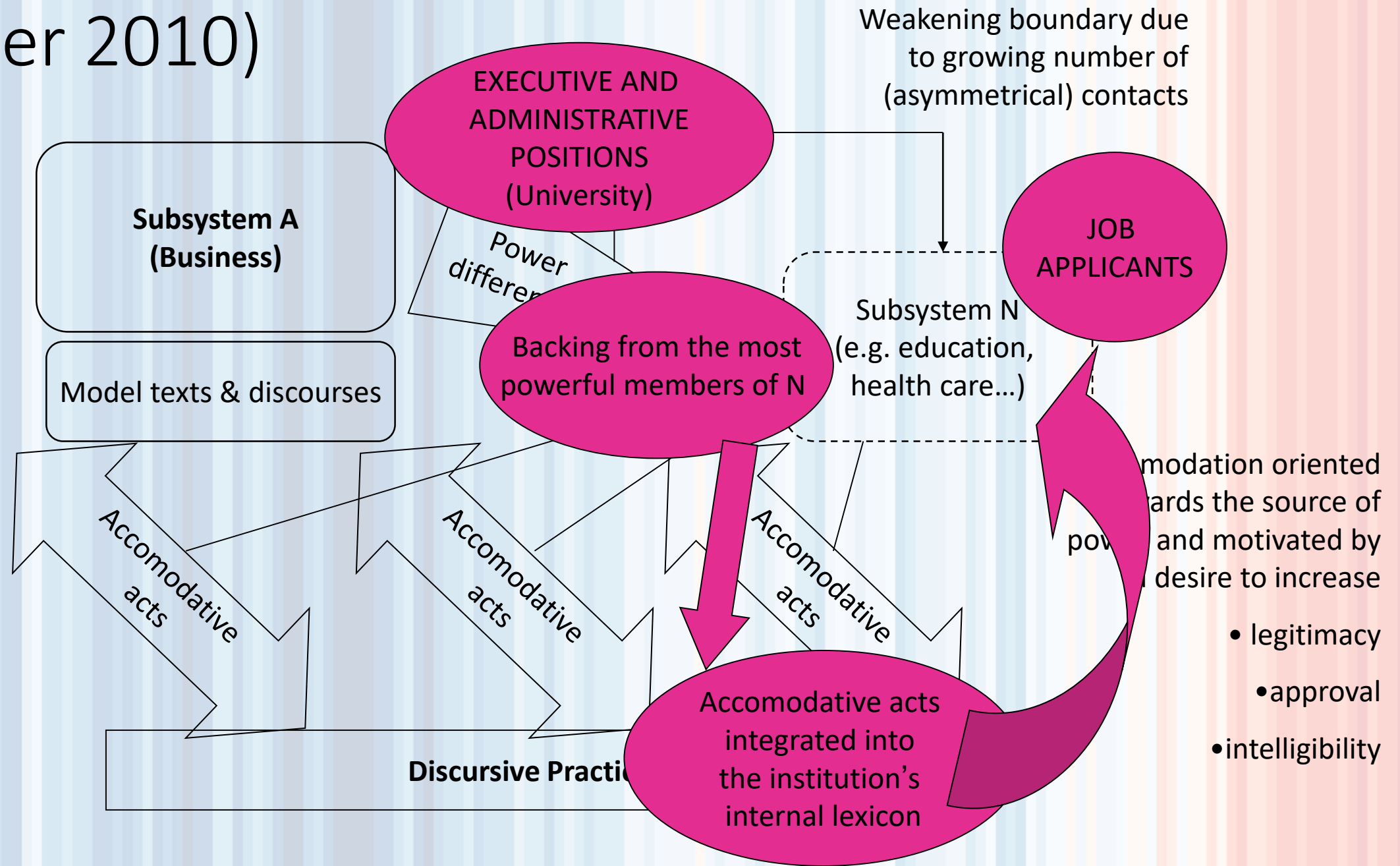
Oosterhuis, H. (2019). "Entrenched Habit or Fringe Mode: Comparing National Bicycle Policies, Cultures and Histories"

# Why, given the available evidence, active travel is not promoted enough?

- George Lakoff's *The trap of Enlightenment Reason*  
'if you just tell people the facts, they will reason to the right conclusion'  
but what actually happens is that  
the **facts must make sense in the recipients' systems of frames**,  
otherwise they will be rejected and ignored (2010, 72–73).
- *Environmental hypocognition*

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/17524030903529749>

# The marketisation of language (Mautner 2010)



# Growthism (Halliday 2001)

the ideologies of **growthism**, sexism and classism are contained in the grammar of our languages and that the unlimitedness of our resources and the special position of humans are also structurally inherent in the language system.

(1) in our SAE [Standard Average European] languages natural **resources are shown to be unlimited** with the use of uncountable nouns or 'mass nouns' suggesting inexhaustibility (*oil, energy, water, air* etc.)

(2) in pairs of contrasts like *big* and *small* **the 'growth word' is always the neutral term**. It is always: how fast is the car (not how slow), how high is the building (not how low), how big is her income (not how small) etc.

(3) our languages are **reluctant to admit non-human agents**: 'what's that forest doing?' would be judged unacceptable by most speakers

(4) the **special position of the human species** is expressed through the pronominal system (*he/she* as special pronouns for humans, *it* for all non-human beings) and through the exclusion of many collocations (*think, know, believe, amiable, sympathetic* etc.) for animals and plants.

# Classism and language

It is acceptable to show up sexism - as it is to show up racism - because to eliminate sexual and racial bias would pose no threat to the existing social order: capitalist society could thrive perfectly well without sex discrimination and without race discrimination. But **it is not acceptable to show up classism**, especially by objective linguistic analysis [...]; **because capitalist society could not exist without discrimination between classes**. Such work could, ultimately, threaten the existing order of society.

Halliday, M. A. K. (2001). *New Ways of Meaning: The Challenge to Applied Linguistics*.

# "pro-car neoliberal automentality" (Walks 2015).

- 'tight ideological symbiosis between the **values promoted by automobility** (individual freedom and autonomy) and **the rationalities of neoliberalism**'.
- 'pro-car neoliberal automentality' has been **internalised by people as part of one's natural rights**, leading them to transform any perceived attack on the automobile as an attack on personal and political freedom.

# London Mayor's Transport Strategy

Three key themes are at the heart of the strategy.

## 1. Healthy Streets and healthy people

Creating streets and street networks that encourage walking, cycling and public transport use **will** reduce car dependency and the health problems it creates.

## 2. A good public transport experience

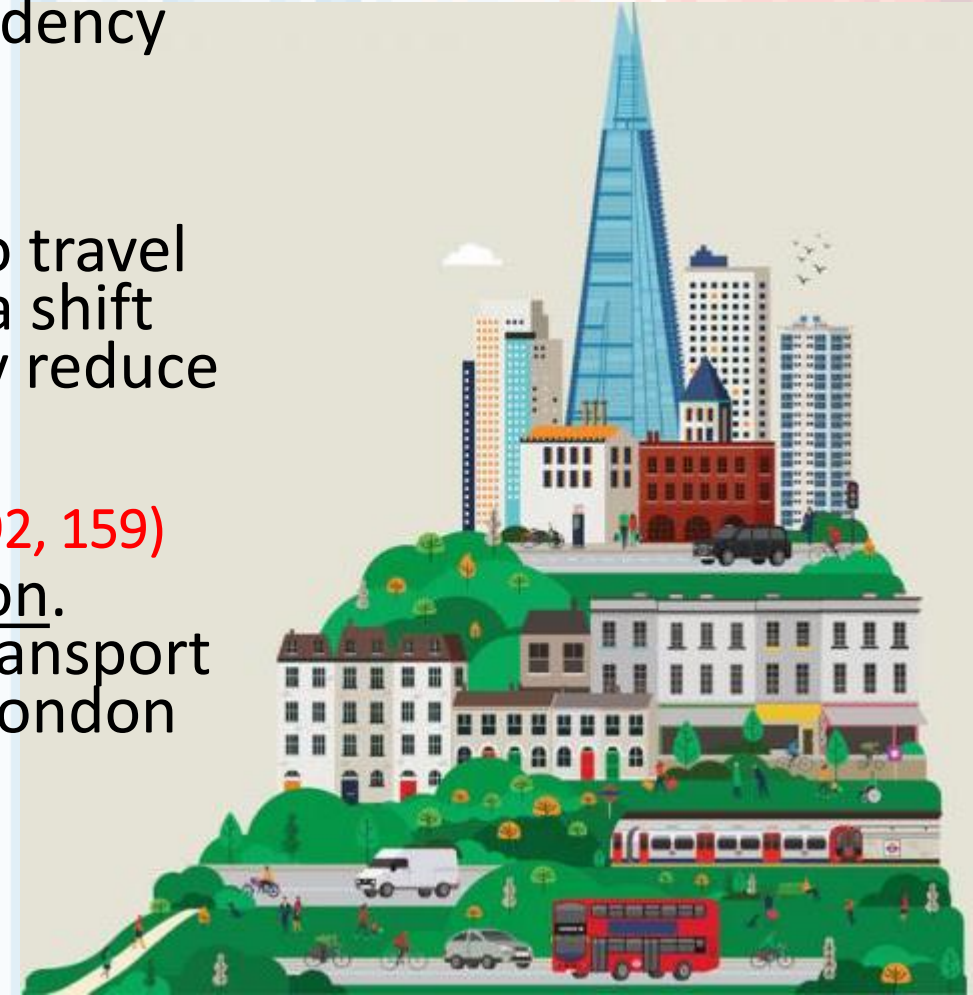
Public transport is the most efficient way for people to travel over distances that are too long to walk or cycle, and a shift from private car to public transport **could** dramatically reduce the number of vehicles on London's streets.

## 3. New homes and jobs **Objective modality (Fairclough 1992, 159)**

More people than ever want to live and work in London.

Planning the city around walking, cycling and public transport use **will** unlock growth in new areas and ensure that London grows in a way that benefits everyone.

<https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/transport/our-vision-transport/mayors-transport-strategy-2018?intcmp=46686>





# *EU Cycling Strategy: Recommendations for Delivering Green Growth (ECF 2017)*

- Another **economic benefit of cycling** comes with the physical and mental health benefits of regular commuting by bike to work, namely diminished work absenteeism, hence providing significant benefits for businesses and employers. (13)
- A healthy lifestyle is urgently needed in view of the **huge costs** of a lack of physical activity to Europe's health care systems. (31)
- In addition to these economic benefits cycling also produces numerous positive **externalities**, for instance a fairer, more liveable and healthy society. (127)

# Reinforcing neoliberal automentality

- Trying to convince people by using the ‘language they speak’ and employing the arguments ‘they will listen to’ appears reasonable.
- **but** from a discursive perspective **it reinforces the dominant ideology.**
- If we assume that
  - neoliberalism is in contrast with climate change mitigation
  - the neoliberal mentality is deeply intertwined with automobility
- then arguing in favour of increases in everyday cycling, using the ‘language of money’ is a self-harming strategy

## 6. ALTERNATIVE MODES OF TRANSPORTATION CREATE SOCIO-ECONOMIC BENEFITS

### Measuring the socio-economic benefits of alternative modes of transportation

Lars Green Lauridsen, Senior Vice President, COWI

Choosing mode of transportation has significant socio-economic impact for societies all over the world. Nowadays commuters are increasingly making a choice between different kinds of transportation in order to arrive at their destination in the most efficient way. Therefore, there is a need for more advanced socio-economic tools to calculate the benefits of these initiatives.

In Denmark there are well developed standards measuring the benefits of transport infrastructure projects to identify the socio-economic value. These assessments include various variables such as construction and maintenance costs, travel time, accidents, public health, and of course environmental effects such as air quality and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

Promoting active and environmentally friendly mobility has socio-economic benefits that can be quite substantial. The potential benefits are perhaps most significant when changing mobility patterns

to commuting by bike instead of by car. For example, for every kilometre commuted by bike instead of by car, society saves around 1 EUR per km. In a city like Copenhagen, people use their bike so much that it compares to 31 times around the world every single day. Cities with less developed cycling infrastructure can potentially save an even greater amount on costs, if they manage to change mobility patterns of even a small percentage of the citizens.

The socio-economic effect of these initiatives leads directly to an improved productivity because less time is spent on the daily commute.

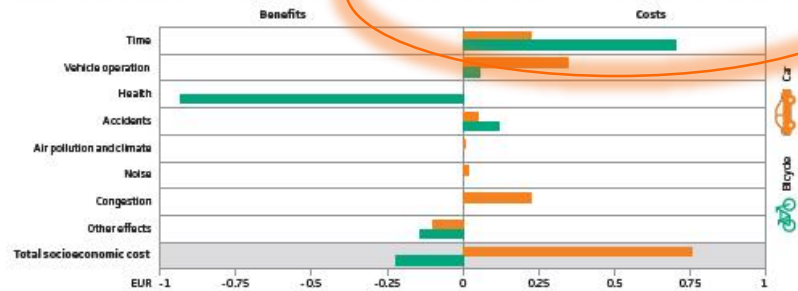
The single most expensive part about traditional car based mobility is the expenses used by municipalities, regions and the state, on maintaining and providing infrastructure for an extremely ineffective mobility choice. As a result, promoting alternative mobility and intermodality can cause significant socio-economic benefits such as less congestion, pollution and healthier

people. The added health benefits can be measured on municipalities' bottom line, as less sick days in companies reduces production losses, in turn positively impacting the economic growth of cities.

*"Denmark is known as one of the best cycling countries of the world, and our cycling infrastructure is among the finest in the world. Why do we do it? Because substantial benefits can be harvested and measured throughout the society when choosing alternative transportation."*

Policy making promoting alternative mobility will be the correct path for cities throughout the world who wish to increase the quality of life for their citizens, while at the same time supporting projects directly beneficial to the city's economy.

### 1 km by car moved to bicycle = 1 EUR in socio-economic benefit



A cost-benefit analysis of a 1 km cycle journey at a speed of 16 km/h in Copenhagen rush hour shows a socioeconomic benefit of 0.22 EUR per km. In comparison, the socio-economic loss of a 1 km car journey at a speed of 50 km/h corresponds to 0.70 EUR. The total saving in cost therefore corresponds to EUR 1 per travelled km. (Source: Copenhagen Bicycle Account 2014)



Photo: Danish Cyclists' Federation

**Encouraging children to bike through effective campaigns**  
The annual All Children Cycle campaign has been assessed by COWI and The Danish Cyclists' Federation using the socio-economic methodology and the unit costs developed for cycling projects. The campaign aims to make school children change their mode of transport to and from school from being driven by their parents to using their bike for a two week period.

The main benefits of the campaign are that more children are physically active giving positive health effects and a reduction in car use.

The socio-economic return is more than EUR 60,000 in net present value from an investment of EUR 290,000. This leads to a return on the campaign costs of 18%, which is more than twice the return on e.g. the fixed Fehmarnbelt tunnel return on investment.

The campaign costs are very low and achieve very high impacts. The number of participants are approximately 136,000 children, where a substantial part of these are 'new' bike users. This leads to more than 600,000 additional bike kilometers and a reduction of 340,000 km in the parents' car use.

COWI

### The Cycle Serpent - a creative cycling solution that benefits the city and the people

The 'Cycle Serpent' in Copenhagen is a great example of a costly yet effective cycling solution in Copenhagen. The project had a cost of EUR 5 million and was partly financed by national funds and by the City of Copenhagen. The new bridge was inaugurated in 2014 and made up the final link between Vesterbro and Islands Brygge. Before it was built, cyclists had to stop and haul their bicycle down two sets of stairs in order to reach the little older (from 2006) bicycle and pedestrian bridge 'Bryggebroen'. A 2014

count shows that there are more than 11,500 cycle journeys across the Cycle Serpent every day - 15% more than expected by the City of Copenhagen. The bridge makes up a missing link in the network of cycling routes in Copenhagen. Every cyclist saves 1 minute by not having to use the stairs, which amounts to almost EUR 2000 a day - more than EUR 0.7 million a year in socio-economic benefits. That gives a payback time of 7 years and is thereby a great benefit to society.

City of Copenhagen



Photo: Ursula Bach

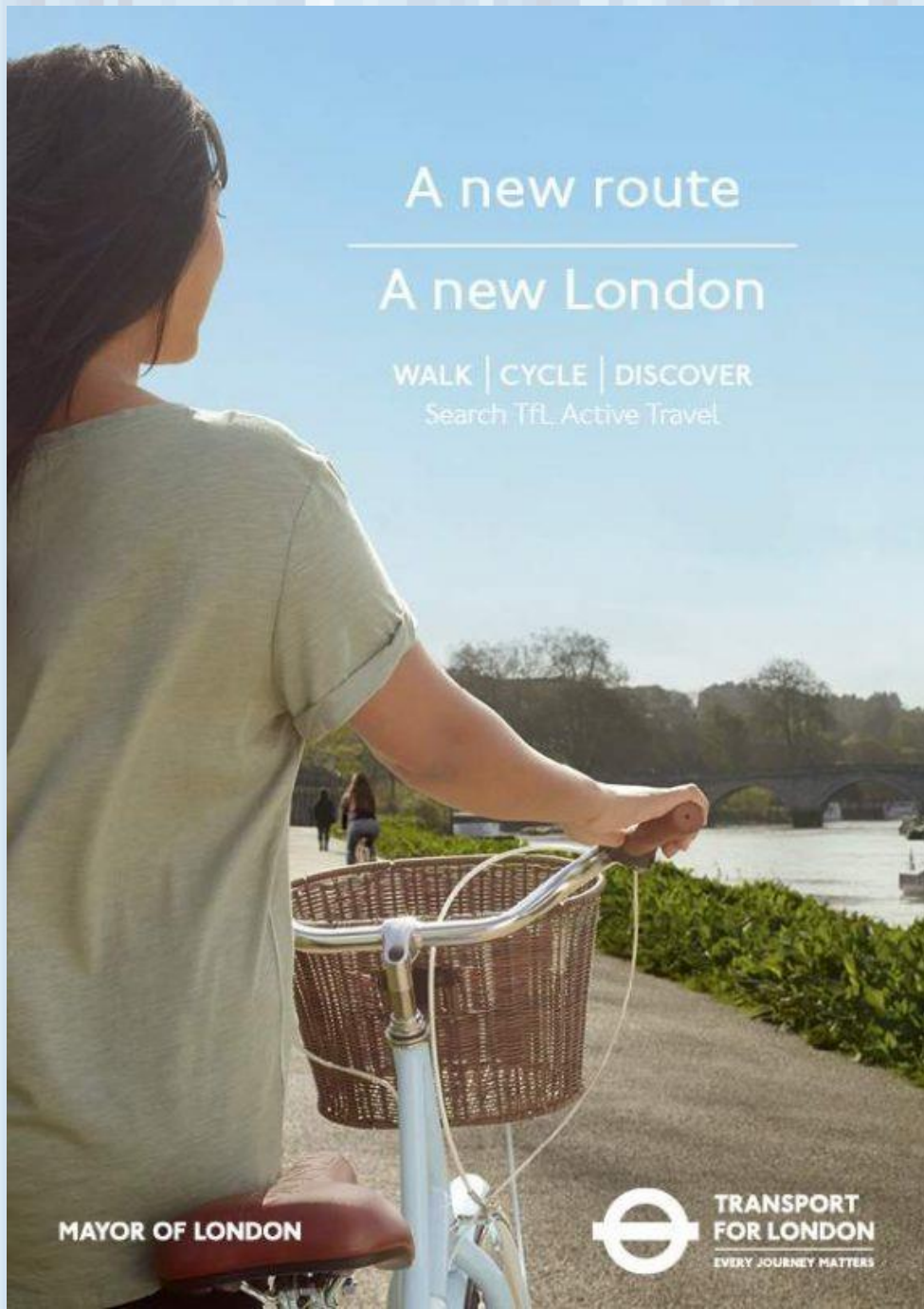
- In the ECF's EUCS 44 occurrences of 'economic', only one is 'socio-economic'.
- In the white paper (SOG 2016) the 19 occurrences of 'economic' are 'socio-economic'
- in 17 cases.

# London in 2030 (LCC, 2020)

- Amidst the rush of a spring morning, someone takes a seat under the shade of a tree, coffee and pastry in hand, and watches the world go by. **A few years ago, the view was mostly parked cars, but it's people that draw the attention now, especially people on the move.** [. . .] There are other sights to take in: the trees, the flowers and the little green spaces where people sit and play; the electric van driver trolleying his load to the greengrocer's before the morning delivery window closes; [. . .] **Despite the busyness, the atmosphere is energising, not enervating. It feels good. It looks good. It sounds good. It even smells and tastes good, and that's not just the coffee.** It's because it's clean and there's nothing to choke on—unless a bit of pastry goes down the wrong way. (LCC 2020b, 18)

# Poli's three approaches to traffic policy

- “**traditional**” the planning relies on revealed preferences, thus reinforcing the current trends, following the preferences revealed by the market. “If roads are filled with cars, it means that we have to build more roads to respond to the demand” (164).
- “**moderate reform**” tries to invert the growing trend in car use by increasing public transportation. It tries to respond to the existing transportation needs by simply changing part of the mobility choices. Welcomed by many environmentalists, it **matches the sustainable development idea**. “In the attempt to involve traditional industry in environmental projects, the sustainable growth environmentalists have become lost in convenient negotiations and have forgotten the real goals” (166).
- “**revolution**”. The revolutionary approach **questions the very need of mobility as we know it** and includes strategies of traffic reduction. Poli (168) compares the need to reduce traffic by reducing the need for car use to the similar problem of waste management and the need to reduce the excess of waste production by addressing the origin of the problem, i.e. excessive packaging. (Poli 2011, 164-166)



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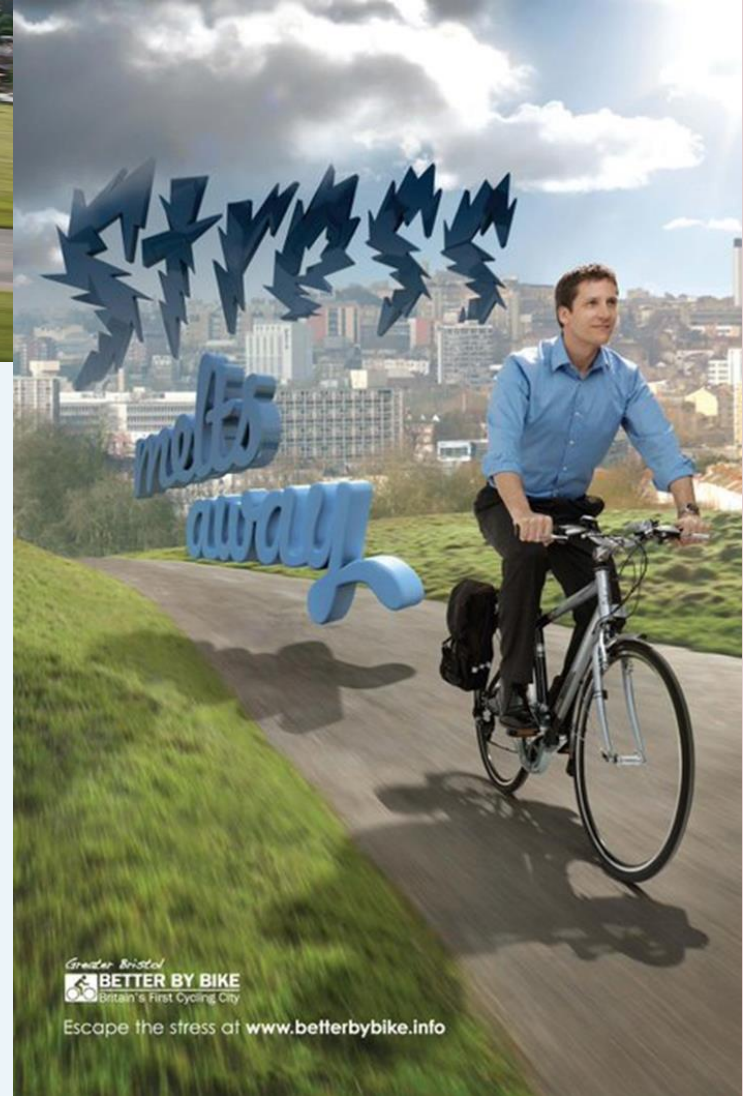
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# WALK RIDE BATH

- <https://wheelsforwellbeing.org.uk/campaigning/guide/>



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# Thank you

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