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## **Century of Cycling: Paths towards Sustainability**

From Shanghai to Bogotá, policy makers, green activists, and cyclist enthusiasts are investing a great deal of political capital on building bicycle lanes as the path towards sustainable urban mobility for our congested cities. A better understanding of history will prepare policy makers to make better informed choices. Over the past hundred years, a world of difference developed between country-side cycling embedded in a culture of sports and leisure and urban cycling rooted in a utilitarian use of everyday life. The different understandings of what cycling is, who is supposed to be the (ideal) bicycle user, and what the purpose of the mobility have generated vastly different artifacts (the high-tech vs. vernacular designs) and infrastructures (protected bike high-ways vs. unmixed and calming of traffic flows).

In the research project *Century of Cycling: Paths towards Sustainability*, it is proposed that the overreliance on segregated bike lanes without understanding the vibrant, diverse, and utilitarian culture of cycling and without a comprehensive view of mobility threaten to be a dead end. Policy makers have been misguided in believing that the building of bicycle lanes is the principle pathway towards sustainable mobility. Moreover, the overreliance on bicycle lanes is also a misreading of history. The knickerbockers' cycling clubs of old times are the spandex cyclists of today. A superficial scan of history may view these young men as early adopters of a modern mode of mobility and cast them as trailblazers, but there is no simple or straight pathway leading from early to late adopters, from small beginnings to large impacts. A closer reading shows that when new groups of users like women, workers, the elderly, and farmers appropriated the innovation, the entire technical environment fundamentally changed character too.

Instead of focusing on technology-driven solutions like bike lanes, an inclusive bicycle culture is perhaps an even more important factor in pushing innovations and granting policy success for sustainability. Insight into the history of bicycling in the industrializing world is the key for policy makers in understanding their options. Building on earlier research on cycling history in nine European cities in six countries and current research of CIAM cities mapping functional cities in Europe and the United will show the crucial importance role of active bicycle users' organizations, local policy makers, and politicians. Class-based representations of cyclists that policy makers and urban planners projected in their visions of the future have been equally important. Those class representations turned into contrasting visions between the movement of bicycle riders and urban planners about the urban built environment and traffic that is still with us today, but have received scant attention from scholarship that *Century of Cycling: Paths towards Sustainability* seeks to address.